

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

VOL. LVII

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By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or  
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No. 1



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE DIVINE AWAKENER

BY STARSON GOSSE

Divine Minstrel, thou hast given a song,  
Which when sung can ope the petals  
Of closed buds ; Truth and beauty throng  
Round golden purity ; lower metals  
Are transformed into invaluable treasures ;  
Each moment finds a meaning in the essence!  
Out of Profundity come true measures  
That tie sublimity with the ordinary cadence!

The universe joins in joyous invitation  
And in that Bliss the soul does awake!  
All discordants vanish ; out of limitation  
Rises the sight of the glittering Lake!

What a song thou hast given unto the world  
Which when sung makes the singer as one  
With the silver tune ; till all is moulded  
In that Profundity, whose race is run,

---



Kali the mother

The stars are blotted out,  
The clouds are covering clouds,  
It is darkness vibrant sonant;  
~~In the~~ In the roaring whirling wind,  
are the souls of a million inmates;  
at ~~Just~~ loosed from prison house,  
wrecking trees by the roots,  
Sweeping all from the path.  
The sea has joined the fray,  
and swirls up mountain-waves,  
to reach the piteous sky.  
The flash of lurid light &  
reveals on every side  
a thousand thousand shades  
of death heaped and black,  
scattering plagues and sorrows,  
Dancing mad with joy.

Come mother Come.

For terror is thy name,  
Death is in thy breath,  
And every shaking step,  
destroys a world for ever.  
li(f) Thow "Time" the all destroyer.

~~Then~~ Come O mother Come

who daries misery love,  
and has the form of death,  
Enjoy destructions dance,  
To him the mother comes.



# THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL STABILITY

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

*Taddinam durdinam manye meghācchannam na durdinam,  
Yaddinam harisamlāpakathāpīyūṣa varjitam.*

‘A cloudy day is not a bad day. That day is really a bad day which is devoid of the nectar of the (inspiring) talks concerning God’.

Somehow or other, in happiness or in sorrow, in good or in evil, days pass away. But if days pass away without the contemplation of God, it shortens one's life, wasting one's time to no purpose.

Do spiritual practices with energy; be completely merged in Him; then only life becomes successful. Of course, one has got to do so much work as is necessary for the upkeep of the body; it is good to do it with a steady mind, because there is no gain whatever by being irritated.

Go on earnestly calling on Him wherever He may choose to keep you. Places do not matter much. But it is necessary to live in such a place where it is easy to contemplate on God. If it is easy to call on God at home, what is the need for going elsewhere? Try to perform worldly duties without attachment as far as you can. Everything can be done by practice in time. Try to be free from care by resigning everything to Him. He alone is doing everything. It is due to delusion that an individual thinks himself to be the doer and for that reason gets bound. Never forget this great Mantra: ‘Not I, not I, but Thou, Thou’. Think of Him alone and you will find that all other thoughts will disappear. Of course, so long the mind remains tied to the body, that is to say, so long bodily ailments impinge upon the mind and hinder contemplation of God, try to do everything to keep the body fit and free from disease. The care of the body is not merely for the body itself, but it is very necessary to care for the body in order to be able to meditate on God.

There is no fear or anxiety if one resigns oneself to the Lord. He helps him in all

possible ways and draws him unto Himself. The mind will have its ebb and flow. Sometimes there is felt great joy in and relish for the contemplation of God and the mind is easily and spontaneously drawn to Him; again, at other times, one does not find any joy in anything, the mind does not turn to the contemplation of God, and great unhappiness covers the heart like a shadow. But he who persistently continues contemplating on God in both the states of mind, who does not neglect it, who goes on practising without remiss whether he relishes it or not, gradually gets rid of the alternating states of ups and downs of his mind and attains to a state where the thought of God flows in an unbroken current. Then the mind automatically goes on thinking of God always, and happiness and misery cannot unsettle him any more. Such a person remains engaged in the contemplation of God in all states and feels great joy within. Man becomes blessed if by the grace of the Lord this spiritual stability is attained.

‘Let the body and its suffering take care of themselves, but you, O my mind, be always happy’—by taking up this detached attitude of Sri Ramakrishna man may be free from all cares. To direct the mind always to that supreme Self—this is what is meant by enjoying perfect happiness. Pain and suffering are inevitable in the embodied state; but why should they make one forget the Lord? Pain etc. are not permanent—they come and go; but the Lord is the help and stay for all time. Let the body experience pain or pleasure, whatever it may be. But to refuse to acknowledge it by the mind and to try to devote the mind to the thought of the Self is the best thing to do in life.

# INDIA AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

BY THE EDITOR

'Mark my words, this is but the small beginning; big things are to follow . . . this I know for certain that millions,—I say deliberately—millions in every civilized land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedanta in its highest form can alone spiritualize their social aspirations'.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

India has a long and great past. She stands out prominent among all the nations of the world because of her civilization—undying and ever creative, born thousands of years ago when many of the great nations of today were still unknown and undiscovered. Centuries before the Christian era, when the whole of the Western world was yet in its infancy, far removed from anything like civilized life, the dawn of true civilization broke in upon the horizon of India. This is the most ancient land on earth where wisdom of the loftiest kind made its earliest home before it went into any other country. The Indian heritage is a glorious and uniquely dynamic one, which has successfully nourished and sustained the nation through the vicissitudes of time and fortune. The two distinctly original characteristics of the cultural life of India, viz., the spirit of unity and the spirit of progress, have preserved her age-long civilization unimpaired, notwithstanding the numerous devastating alien inroads upon her cultural, political, and economic life. As Jawaharlal Nehru says, 'It is interesting and rather wonderful to think of the long range and continuity of Indian culture and civilization, right from the dawn of history, through long ages, down to us. In a sense, we in India are the heirs of these thousands of years'.

Though Indian civilization claims a hoary antiquity, it has, unlike the civilizations of old that took birth in Egypt and Babylonia, withstood the ravages of time and survived to the present day, maintaining intact most of its

essential features. No other civilization, with the possible exception of that of China, has manifested such adaptability and continuity, such moral fervour and spiritual outlook as the civilization of India has done. It may safely be affirmed, notwithstanding the opinions of many a Western scholar to the contrary, that Indian cultural life, beginning much earlier than the oldest of the 'dead' civilizations, is still in its youthful vigour today, continuing with full confidence, fresh hopes, and great aspirations that are characteristic of its vital spirit. No doubt the civilization of India has gone through many alternate periods of shrinkage and expansion, involution and evolution, often making it difficult to probe into its depths and understand its different aspects without confronting much that is likely to appear nebulous, speculative, and controversial. Yet, it has never suffered any pronounced change in its fundamentals to show that it has lost its youthful nature, and even today it bids fair to continue to maintain its youth for even a far longer future than its long and glorious past. In spite of invasions and battles, persecution and conquest, the ancient civilization has continued to run, with more or less undiminished vitality, enduring to this day as the basis of Indian life and thought.

But centuries have rolled away. Now we are living in a world where conditions are unique and unprecedented in more ways than one. At no time in the past was the world so divided by hatred, greed, and political



conflict. All our interests today—material, moral, and spiritual—are coloured by enormous selfishness and a conception of power politics that rule the world. Doubtless a new world order is in the making, but at what cost? Unity and equality have been much misunderstood and misused. In this age of cultural iconoclasm and scientific disbelief, man's place in the universe has been seriously and unfavourably affected. Notwithstanding the increases in happiness that wisely used science and the growth of industrialism have rendered possible, human life has not been made a matter of unalloyed bliss. The failure of secular humanism and fanatical theocracy, together with a hedonistic philosophy that is being suggested by the triumphs of science, has led to a ferment in society, creating at the same time a vacuum in men's hearts—a vacuum which has, in the absence of right satisfactions, been filled by ideological perversions of a bewildering variety. A world order which aims at making life more complex and more dependent on political methods and economic creeds could hardly claim stability, much less universal acceptance. A world commonwealth cannot be composed of slave nations and cannot be fostered through capricious and irresponsible exercise of power and authority. Of what avail is a new world order which lacks spiritual vitality and ethical perfection and, as a result of this, suffocates the spirit of man and provides but shortlived satisfaction? The conflicts of power in modern culture cannot be resolved by social or political 'isms' which set store by material values and physical comfort alone, neglecting the essential spiritual roots of human personality.

In the ushering in of an enduring world order, it need hardly be emphasized that material progress cannot go far or last long unless it has its foundations in moral principles and spiritual ideals. Political freedom and economic stability and sufficiency are indispensable as means of satisfying human wants and achieving progress. But to seek material progress at the cost of life values and spiritual integrity is the height of unwisdom, for it will

degrade the individual into a selfish opportunist who will not hesitate to be a villain and act unrighteously whenever it suits him. Self-interest, fear, and mutual distrust have been still playing an all-important part in the affairs of the world. Terrible preparations are going on in different parts of the world for purposes of offence and defence. Yet, every sane person detests war and hankers after peace. It is as though each nation is wanting and waiting to profit at the expense of and rise on the ruin of the others. But it is absurd even to think for a moment that such an aim could be cherished by any nation which sincerely desires the establishment of peace and world understanding. Not a mere self-sufficient freedom but an interdependence of peace-loving nations should be the goal of any stable world order.

A great stir of life is visible almost everywhere, more especially in India. In all fields, after passing through a short period of helpless imitation or frustration, Indians are now gradually coming to a sense of self-consciousness. The new awakening in India has opened our eyes to the greatness and strength as well as to the drawbacks of the nation. The urge to progress and the earnestness to regain India's worthy place in the comity of nations will make the people more determined to root out all social evils that are hindering the country's onward march. Swami Vivekananda, in some of his famous Indian lectures, has boldly and clearly indicated the way to national regeneration. His message is essentially a message of strength, faith (*śraddhā*), and fearlessness. His charge to national workers and patriots is to *feel* from the heart, feel for the masses, for the millions who are illiterate, ignorant, and poor. He says: 'When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for their country, sincere to the backbone—when such men arise, India will become great in every respect. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for



the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance'.

Not long before the end of the last great war it was the general hope that there was going to be a new world, very different from and happier than the one that was crumbling away. A new world order, with better conditions of living and greater opportunities of striving, is no doubt a pleasing prospect to one and all. Have we been able to establish such an order yet? Or does it still appear a far cry? Referring to the kind of disposition that must be widely diffused if a happy and stable world is to be created and sustained, Bertrand Russell writes,

'It is a sad fact of human nature that the hope of happiness to unborn millions does not stir enthusiasm as much as the hope of unhappiness to one hated enemy. It is this that keeps evil in being: we have less desire for the welfare of our friends than for the punishment of our enemies. If this cannot be changed, it will be useless to create a good world, since it would cease to please as soon as those who opposed it were liquidated'.

Every nation cherishes some lofty ideal which it seeks to realize and propagate as the best ideal of a happier and better state of existence. Every individual too has his or her own conception of a new and more desirable social order. The desire for progress and well-being is universal, and everyone wishes the world order were shaped according to his own conception. Fascism, aggressive nationalism, totalitarianism, socialism, and communism—each one of these has put forth a powerful ideology of its own, often backed by military might, as the panacea for the malady of civilization as it obtains today. The one feature common to all these systems is their great concern for the rise and destiny of the common man. In addition to this there are other things that are indispensable if there is to be an end to all wars and rumours of wars, viz. a world government, political democracy, and the traditional liberal freedoms. Over and above all these, the most essential factor that can help mankind enjoy a far higher degree of well-being is the spiritual basis

of society. Unless the secular superstructure of civilization is placed on broad and strong spiritual foundations, it is difficult to see how the world, as it stands today, can be saved from the threat of facing utter disaster.

With patterns of progress and blue-prints of world peace galore, nobody with the minimum of intelligence and understanding can minimize the importance of the roles of science and democracy in the making of a better order of society. But where does religion come in? Perhaps nowhere, as many a poet, politician, or scientist would have us believe! Finding that religion, in the West, as it emerged from the portals of the organized church, became a dogmatic protagonist of parochial illiberality, suppression of free thought, and abdication of critical judgment, the high priests of scientific materialism arrived at the conclusion that religion was more a hindrance than a help to human progress. But to attempt to detach ethics from spirituality and replace spiritual mysticism by political idolatry is not the way to achieve real progress either. If the testimony of historians is to be believed, one cannot ignore the patent fact that the signs of any new awakening in the cultural, political, or social field, in any country, is invariably accompanied by an equally, if not more, powerful revival in the fields of ethics, philosophy, and religion. Unfortunately, however, the ridiculous view that religion is like an 'opiate' and is the cause of manifold evils, and that it should therefore be ignored or suppressed has found favour with a section of people. It is obvious that those who hold this view do not know what real religion is and what its great benefits are. Such misinformed criticism is no better than the appraisal of a priceless gem by a brinjal-seller or a blacksmith.

The need for a lasting unity and understanding among men and nations was never so urgent and important as today. Social values and norms in every land are being revolutionized by world forces which are themselves in constant conflict. Notwithstanding the epidemic of severe political unrest that



has broken out in every country, India—the ancient land of peace, tolerance, and spirituality, the eternal home of love, Truth, and Dharma—has a sublime and soothing message to offer to the world. Though she herself is standing on the threshold of a new era of freedom and is just now launching forth on the biggest enterprise ever in the history of democracy, she has her great and substantial contribution to make in ushering in a new world order. In a nutshell, India's message to the nations of the world, both big and small, is: 'Help and not fight, Assimilation and not destruction, Harmony and Peace and not dissension'. It was given to her to preserve and proclaim the essential spiritual values of humanity, and to lead mankind from non-existence to Existence, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality. The ideals of democracy and of equality between man and man, which form as it were the background of the present-day social order everywhere, originally sprang from the basic tenets of Vedanta, viz., the divinity of man and the oneness of existence. The other two salient tenets of Vedanta, viz., the unity of God and the harmony of religions, have from time immemorial taught India and the world the great lesson of infinite tolerance, nay acceptance.

In India religion has ever been the pivot upon which all activity has turned; to realize the spiritual ideal has been considered the main purpose of life, and that purpose has always motivated the people. Hence India's chief contribution to the cause of world peace and international understanding is to spread broadcast moral and spiritual ideas before deluging the world with social and political ideas. She has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not mere theories but can be practised to perfection, thereby producing men and women of the most exalted character who alone can work for and establish the new world order for which mankind is expectantly looking forward. It is not merely the poets, politicians, and scientists who are the benefactors of civilization, for, the great

spiritual leaders of mankind, who awaken the spiritual consciousness of man and secure for him the unfailing vision of a better order of society, do make equally, if not more, constructive and practical contributions to civilization.

India was never static or obstinately conservative in the course of her long and illustrious history, except perhaps for short periods in the very recent past and that for obvious reasons. She has remained as eager to give forth to and teach others unstintingly as to take in and learn from others unhesitatingly. It cannot be said that India ever tried to withhold her wealth of cultural and spiritual heritage from any other nation. She has rightly been mentioned as the 'cultural Guru' of the world, and Western scholars themselves conclusively admit the very great influence of Indian thought on the thought of the West. Victor Cousin, the eminent French philosopher, whose knowledge of the history of European philosophy was unrivalled, writes:

'When we read the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East,—above all, those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe,—we discover there many a truth, and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy'.

The debt that the world owes to India is immense. She possesses in her spiritual ideals the key to the progress of humanity, through a world order firmly based on all that is noblest and best in human personality. She has demonstrated the practicality of the spiritual ideal by giving birth to God-men who have acted as beacon-lights to millions in all times and climes. The Indian ideal of a universal religion has sought to foster a unity among men of every land, lifting them above their social, national, and religious barriers—not by violently tearing down these barriers but by enabling men to rise above them through spiritual communion. No stable organization for human unification and the culti-



vation of love and brotherhood can be created or developed on the basis of violent coercion, dead uniformity, or class hatred, whatever its other benefits in the field of politics and economics. India's ideal is never to pull down man from a higher to a lower level but to lift him up from a lower to a higher level. Her method is always constructive, not destructive, slow but steady, never its opposite.

The time has come for India to conserve and release her immense spiritual power in order to counteract the destructive forces that subdue and dominate the human race. The ancient Indian ideal, which says—'May all be happy, may all achieve their real welfare', has got to be revived in the cause of the uplift of mankind. The whole world requires

spiritual light and moral guidance. The demand for a new order of society is becoming more and more insistent, especially in view of the intolerable situation arising out of inordinate lust and greed of gain. India alone has the highest spiritual truth for which the entire outside world is waiting. Indian thought has to stand revealed in its fullness of synthesis—not as a sect but as a unity in diversity. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind'. This is the task before the nation.

## WHAT VEDANTA MEANS TO ME

BY GERALD HEARD

'Define your terms', the reader will say, as he has a right to. For the phrase used above as a caption is, if not ambiguous, certainly double. It calls for both what I *mean* by Vedanta and also what Vedanta *does* for me. That is, what do I take Vedanta to be; and how for me does it seem to work?

Clearly then, I must take the first question first. The definition given in Vedantic literature seems to me satisfactory: the threefold statement that man's nature is divine, that it is the aim of man's life here on earth to unfold the divine nature within him, and that this basic truth is universal—that is, that every religion that has inspired mankind has been trying to state these facts. In short, Vedanta offers that system of thought and way of life for which increasingly men have been looking: a universal religion in which could be combined all men of goodwill.

I think, too, I would and may add something to the above answer to the question of

what does Vedanta mean. What makes it seem to me the best theory of and reaction to the whole is, in a phrase, that its span is commensurate with its grasp. That is to say, it is vastly tolerant, or to be more precise, charitable. And it is also precisionally free from sentiment. In it kindness and truth are not in conflict. It secures these supreme values, these necessities of a universal religion, by its teaching that God is at once immanent and transcendent. To use a condensed technical term, it sees the problem of evil as arising from the problem of time, and the riddle of an objective world—which appears largely irrelevant—it perceives as an issue of epistemology. In consequence, it is neither careless nor despairing about pain and sin. It neither says they are just accidents soon to be swept away by more accurate science, nor does it say that each individual makes his own world. Either alternative is seen as too simple.

Vedanta would allow that we have made

this world as it seems to us, but it would also add that the 'we' who make it are no more the various egos who think themselves the final units of consciousness than that 'we' are the creator gods who in backward myths are said to be the makers of the world. Vedanta, as far as I know, teaches that within time there is evil as ruthlessly real as time itself. But rise above time and there is no evil. All the great religions have of course taught that God is eternal—not everlasting, for that is to be extended in time. Therefore he does not dispute with evil. But only the mystics have consistently taught that rising to union with Him is the one way in which that problem can be transcended; for only the transcendent and those who are united in the unity of the One are beyond evil. To say that evil does not exist and still to desire the appetites, love possessions, and claim recognition is to demonstrate ignorance, not transcendence.

Vedanta is then cosmologically satisfactory. It shows that what we call evil is a misapprehension, but it is a misapprehension more real because more persistent than that of the hypnotized patient whose skin swells into a painful blister when he is told that the cold penny let drop on his flesh was 'really' red-hot.

Of course one great religion, Buddhism, that sprang from Vedanta, criticized its parent for having *any* cosmology. Systems of metaphysics, Buddhism treated as fetters. But that Vedanta's minimum was and is necessary has been proved by four things.

First, Buddhism split on this issue and the Mahayana built up a metaphysic as vast if not vaster than Vedanta's.

Second, the Pali, 'southern' school, rejecting all metaphysic, tried to operate with nothing but a psychology. In consequence it has always been in danger of forging an instrument that could be used for bad quite as much as for good purposes. The most striking illustration of this is given by the development of Mahayana in Japan where the Zen teachers, anxious to rid themselves of the vast ritual and speculation of the late Mahayana,

again tried to reduce Buddhism to an empiric psychology and made from many Zen initiates perfect instruments for the fanatic nationalism that brought Japan to defeat. In the meantime, in the Ceylonic schools we can say the doctrine of holy selfishness—a phrase coined by St. Jerome—was preached with a grim logical frankness. For where there is no doctrine of grace and no clear teaching as to what the enlightened state is and its relation is to the needs of others, then it is impossible to regard compassion as other than, in Dr. Hocking's phrase, the 'noble inconsistency' in the noble path.

Third, Buddhism had for some time no message for the layman and could not have. When it did it was committed to what it accepted as, and what in the West has been called, the doctrine of the two lives, lay and monastic. Inevitably also, as was the West, it became committed to a doctrine of *four* lives: that of the simple active, who can keep no more than the code of justice and avoid wanton cruelty; that of the just merchant; that of the chivalrous knight; and that of the specifically 'religious', who was to aim at the law of charity.

Fourth and finally, Vedanta not only originally taught that there were four lives—that is, four kinds of mankind incarnate—but Vedanta was as rich laterally as it was longitudinally. It had not only four stations for various types of mankind on the ladder of being; it had parallel places for those who might be similarly advanced, of equal spirituality, but needing different methods to help them to the final liberation and enlightenment. All religions lead to God and all converge on that final God—quite true—but till late on the path, people of great goodness may need to use different methods. This fact has often led to bitter intolerance, with ritualists persecuting those who were unhelped by its dramatic forms, non-ritualists treating as abominable idolators those who used images. Vedanta has avoided this danger also.

It would seem then that in Vedanta—once its universalism is understood—must lie the



religion of mankind. As it moves over the world, it will tend to express its eternal and universal truth in the vernacular of the era in which it is conveying its message.

These then very briefly seem to be some of the main reasons why one may believe that Vedanta, with its interpretive charity towards the other great faiths, may become the spiritual spokesman for mankind.

And now as to the further question: What does Vedanta do for a particular experiment and experimenter? There one may say that its particular blend of empiricism with metaphysic, the width of its cosmology, the vastness of the picture which it gives of human destiny, and the immediate practicalness of its advices and practices—this amalgam seems most suitable to anyone who wants a method which is psychological and a world view that can match modern knowledge of the cosmos.

The knife-edge in this respect runs between a faith that is rightly urgent and a knowledge that is vastly patient. In Vedanta there is what may be called 'the choice of dooms': a non-human birth, a repeated human birth that is bad, fair, or good, gradual post-mortem enlightenment through passing through the Brahma-loka, enlightenment at the moment of death, and enlightenment while still in the body. This richness of choice makes for neither panic nor for slackness. Many religions have sought to produce urgency by teaching the irrevocable finality of the choice made here and even the choice at the moment of death. As a matter of actual experience, this attitude too often leads to either despair or carelessness, the very things the teaching attempts to oppose and cure.

Vedanta does not neglect the importance of the death moment, but it teaches that you will not be able to avail yourself of that moment's full power of choice unless all your life you have been preparing for it, and also, that though the moment of death decides the course of the soul, maybe for an immense period, yet nothing is irrevocable but the final end of the story—to which all must come sooner or later—union with the one.

This doctrine then is neither slack nor does it make an offence against the moral law and the conception of compassion as of the nature of the universe. An eternal hell, whether it frightens a few people into panic behaviour or no, is one which is metaphysically, theologically impermissible. For its existence means that God has been defeated for good and all by some part of his creation. Even on the basis of providing an additional safeguard to police protection, no thinking person can entertain a proposition which is so absurd.

The other knife-edge that Vedanta seems to travel is between the opposed dangers of a doctrine of grace which removes all need for self-effort and one that teaches that there is no worker but yourself; you save yourself or no one can. This, again, of course, dates from an inadequate psychology which thought of the individual as the one irreducible and unexpandable unit of consciousness. The teaching that the wind of grace is always blowing but you must raise—and keep raised—your sail; this is the only doctrine which in East or West has ever made complete saints, men who achieved entire wholeness. It does more; it also gives the first insight into the doctrine of Karma, a doctrine which we must now remember is being forced on Western man, not by religion but by genetics—that we are born with a fate which we can modify but never disregard and indeed can modify only insofar as we accept it.

If we are really all much more members and parts of each other than the Renaissance conception of individualism thought, then Vedanta is not only more scientific than the Renaissance outlook; it also offers a way of life more truthful and at the same time more practical. Human nature can be changed, once we realize what human nature is. And he who changes himself is actually changing others. Private salvation is a contradiction in terms. For we are saved from isolation, privacy, egotism into the One who embraces all.

Human nature—that phrase leads to two further points which appear as important de-



finitions of Vedanta, showing how it balances between 'life rejection' and 'life acceptance', between despairing pessimism and unsubstantiated optimism. Western asceticism has tended to take that aspect of mortification which regards the body as a foul prison—this 'vile body', as the English translators rendered St. Paul's phrase—and this life as a vale of never-ceasing tears. The *Theologia Germanica*, following this tradition, says that Christ never had a moment's joy in his whole life, a remark that the Gospels would certainly seem to deny. Luther refers to the body as nothing but a sack of worms. Later Protestantism reacting from this, whirled around and has tended to say that the body should, with rational hygiene and giving it its head as far as the appetites are concerned, become a lasting delight. Likewise the world, properly tidied, should prove a paradise.

Vedanta teaches that the body is invaluable and must most carefully be kept in health, because—and only because—it alone can be the egg in which the soul may hatch. Likewise the world, it too is the shell of that egg in which we hatch. And the further we advance in growth the more we shall be able to see that this world appears as a heaven to him, but only to him, whose body and mind have become truly translucent. To him this experience of time and grace is as God sees it, Nirvana, the state beyond all conflict and separateness.

Vedanta, then, in regard to the physical

body and the temporal world, finds the true attitude and balance. This is a middle world in which we are embryos, tadpoles of eternity. Heraclitus's phrase, 'here we are as in an egg', may be taken as a good definition of our physical condition and what we should do about it. We may define our environment in that saying of Jesus preserved for us, not by the Western canon, but by the Indian emperor Akbar when he had carved over the capital he deserted as soon as it had been built: 'Said Jesus, may his name be blessed, "This world is a bridge; pass over it, but build no house upon it".'

Such then seem to be very briefly the reasons, general and personal, philosophic and empiric, for our availing ourselves of all that Vedanta can teach us, and striving to practise it. For so only may we really learn to understand ourselves and become at length mobilized for the rightful service of others. The actual terminology in which such a system of thought and action is conveyed must always be modulated to the place and time in which it is being conveyed. Vedanta is so ancient that we can see it doing this throughout the ages. And because of this we can perceive the essential and unchanging under the topical and can now at present see that here and now by its present teachers and practicers it is growing for itself the instruments of expression and practice whereby it may speak in the vernacular of our contemporary lives to Western man.

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'Man, after his vain search after various gods outside himself, completes the circle, and comes back to the point from which he started—the human soul, and he finds that the God whom he was searching in hill and dale, whom he was seeking in every brook, in every temple, in churches and heavens, that God whom he was imagining as sitting in heaven and ruling the world, is his own Self. I am He, and He is I. None but I was God, and this little I never existed.'

—Swami Vivekananda

# WHO ARE THE PEACEMAKERS?

BY SWAMI TEJASANANDA

It has become the fashion of the day to talk of peace with atom bombs in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Bombs and bombers—the gifts of modern science—and a thousand other destructive weapons, forged on the anvil of inordinate greed for pelf and power, are being counted as one of the most effective means to ensure peace on earth by some militant nations of the world. As a consequence, a hectic race for an increase of armament has already started with breakneck speed. Everywhere in the East and the West the atmosphere has been electrified with this ideology of peace, though the sponsors thereof do not actually know what they mean by their glib talks. Needless to point out that the quick march of events in the great drama of politico-economic life of the present day has only proved the antithesis of what these peacemakers loudly profess. It has brought into bolder relief the clash and conflict of mutually repellent molecules of the body politic, struggling for self-assertion in their respective ideological spheres. Nazism, nursed at one time into the full flame of life by the insatiable craze for territorial expansion, has, in the opinion of some, met with its inevitable doom; but one still wonders whether the Aristos of yesterday has really handed his sceptre to the Demos of today or the old imperialism is once again raising its venomous hood under the cover of a new name. Communism—one of the most powerful forces of the day—has already spread, like an octopus, covertly or overtly, its ever expanding net, almost all over the earth. Socialism—an amalgam of the products of the great French Revolution and of the Oriental theory of social equity and justice—has also come to the fore, to grip the mass mind, for a better social order based on the recognition of the fundamental rights of human beings to live a moral, peaceful, and happy life on earth. There are,

besides, various other 'isms' that have of late been ushered into existence as a result of the conflict of interests, and are demanding speedy solution and fulfilment—each in its own way. In fact, a revolutionary ferment is perceptible everywhere, which is symptomatic of a change that humanity wants for a better economic and social adjustment to ensure a peaceful order of life.

It is very often said that history is a great teacher and an eye-opener, and serves as a powerful check on human passions and emotions. For good or for evil, history records in characters of blood the darkest deeds of humanity, and paints in letters of gold the brightest achievements of mankind as well. This is a naked picture we find silhouetted, side by side, in the horizon of human history. But how far human nature has recoiled back once for all from such an orgy of bloodshed and glided into the groove of righteous activity,—the world is still to know, and history is yet to produce. Can swords, cannon, and bombers meet the requirements of the human soul that thirsts for peace? It has been aptly said by A. J. Toynbee, in his *Study of History*:

'The truth seems to be that the sword which has once drunk blood cannot be permanently restrained from drinking blood again any more than a tiger which has once tasted human flesh can be prevented from becoming a man-eater doomed to death; if he escapes the bullet he will die of the mange; yet, even if the tiger could foresee his doom, he would probably be unable to subdue his devouring appetite; and so it is with a society which has once sought salvation through the sword'.

As a matter of fact, our social life has become so complex and our demands so exacting that the politically-minded people, bound to the soil, can hardly approach the problem with that balance of thought and suavity of temper, that depth of wisdom and width of vision, which characterize a superman who



has transcended the sordid limitations of human nature and has earned the much-needed intellectual outlook and spiritual dispassion to look beyond the borders of his soil and to embrace the rest of mankind within the sweep of his catholic and synthetic vision. The much-maligned science, that has released unforeseen forces beyond control, has, in the eyes of these great souls, a blessed role to play in rebuilding human society. It is not merely a weapon for destruction but furnishes also a splendid material for construction. In the hands of blood-thirsty monsters it is utilized for devilish ends. But it is a blessing when properly manipulated. Its claim as a salutary force to solve the arcana of the universe, in co-operation with philosophy, has been recognized by master minds. Scientific geniuses like Einstein, Max Planck, Heisenberg, Jeans, Eddington, and others have brought about a mighty revolution in the realm of thought. Science of the West and the philosophy of the East have now begun to shake hands with each other. To quote a well-known European writer:

'The enthusiastic activities of European scientists can now be harmonized with the calm contemplation of Oriental sages. The butterfly of true integral wisdom can ere long burst forth from its cocoon, wherein it has matured and sheltered during the past. This union may presage the new East-West civilization which may one day arise when the spindle of time has spun far beyond our counting and the primacy of materialism has been deposed, and when truth may sit enthroned to direct the real renaissance of all human life and labour'.

Placed in the midst of these mighty revolutions that are happening in the thought-world of mankind, we are perforce to ponder seriously over where India stands today and what role she is now to play in the shaping of human destiny. The old order has changed almost beyond recognition, yielding place to the new. Distances of time and space have been killed through the magic of science. Continents, races, and nations were never so close as they are today. The marvels of science 'fill our home, throng our streets, float on the five oceans, and move invisibly through space. It has shifted the foundations of human life,

affected the spirit of our time, and altered our outlook'. Any novel thought, springing anywhere into life, finds a welcome response in the twinkling of an eye in the farthest end of the earth. It no longer eddies only within the confines of a single race or nation but transcends its limitations, geographical or other, and becomes the possession of the whole of humanity the very next moment. India, once the spiritual mistress of the world, can hardly stand as an idle witness to these movements of thoughts in the context of modern revolutionary changes. With the achievement of independence her responsibility to shape human culture to a nobler end has increased a thousandfold, and every eye is now focussed upon her for proper guidance. Cultural forces, travelling with the speed of lightning from land to land, from continent to continent, are silently seeping not only into the lives of different peoples but are imperceptibly infiltrating into the soul of India as well. The struggle between Capitalism and Labour, between 'haves' and 'have-nots', and between similar other opposites of the Western brand has begun to invade the soil of India also and create a ferment unprecedented in the history of the country.

The solution of this raging conflict of principles and ideologies, as is noticeable in all its ugliness both in India and the world around can never come from the clang and clatter of arms or threat of atom bombs. They have been tried and found wanting. They may decimate into pieces the finest achievements of arts and science, convert in a moment a rich and prosperous land into a trackless desert, and make a holocaust of innocent lives, but can never bring peace and happiness to human society. Has war brought the horizon of peace nearer or made it recede farther and farther to the vanishing point? War after war is being waged from time immemorial in the holy name of peace and happiness; but it is peace and happiness of mankind that are being murdered from day to day by the so-called sponsors and advocates of peace through violence. What a tragic irony!

Peace generally presupposes equilibrium



of forces and uniformity of thought, which in their turn negate loss of balance and posit cessation of conflicting activities—a condition of life which the history of the human race has up till now failed to produce in the collective life of mankind. It is but common knowledge that variety and clash of thought is the matrix of creation and sign of life. To think of humanity professing only one religion or following only one principle is not only preposterous but is a presage for a coming dissolution and the silence of the cemetery where there may be uniformity but no activity or sign of life. But still we dream of peace, talk of peace, and run after peace in the material world! There is a plethora of peacemakers, holding *pourparlers* and entering into secret pacts from age to age, and even at the present moment. But the big interrogation still remains: Have we gained peace?

As a matter of fact, in all our vain search for peace, we are, all the while, by-passing the real peacemakers—the torch-bearers of truth—those prophets of mankind who have proclaimed from age to age the eternal principles that would furnish the *terra firma* on which to build the edifice of peace. Hatred begets hatred, fear begets violence, and peace begotten of such violence is never the stuff of peace that humanity wants. It can never be that golden peace that harmonizes all conflicting interests and sees unity in diversity and fills every home with unspeakable joy. Rightly did Nietzsche, the great German thinker, feel, in his silent solitary home on the mountain top, and declare with the force of his conviction, 'The greatest Events—these are not our loudest; on the contrary, the quietest hours. The world turns itself not around the discoverers of new noises, but around the discoverers of new values'. In fact, this writer's reference to the discovery of new values indicates the new angle of vision from which the problem of peace can be approached. Politicians and economists, bereft of the deeper insight and balanced wisdom of the spiritually enlightened Columbus of the world, can at most pounce upon the surface-value of life and things, and

attempt at a patchwork. But that can never serve as an anodyne for the ailments of humanity. The world has had enough of such *soi-disant* saviours who cannot see more than what meets the eye and have as such created more wars and more harm than good to human society in the name of peace.

The world is still proud of the rich heritage of spiritual culture bequeathed to posterity by the real Prophets of peace—Buddha, Jesus, Shankara, Nanak, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and the like—who saw the 'Face of Peace' and discovered the real values of life, and whose voice was the eternal voice of Truth and whose life was one eloquent process of dedication and prayer, renunciation and service. Did not Buddha sacrifice his all for the sake of peace and lay down his life for the service of humanity? Did he invoke the aid of the sword to inaugurate peace in the world? Did he adopt the politician's or the economist's methods for the achievement of this supreme end? Far from it. His voice of peace has rung down the corridor of centuries in superb eloquence, and even now one-third of humanity pays loving homage to this shining 'Light of Asia' with all humility and reverence. Similar is the history of Jesus Christ—another great Prophet of Peace, born in the holy land of Asia. 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword'—such are the words of the great Jesus of Nazareth who first healed the wound which Peter's sword had inflicted, and then voluntarily delivered his own person up to suffer the last extremes of insult and torment. Such a Prophet of Peace would welcome death on the Cross rather than sell the self for pelf or conquer with the sword. Toynbee again puts the poser and himself answers it significantly :

'What inspires the Nazarene Saviour to take this tremendous new departure? . . . The answer is that these others knew themselves to be no more than men, whereas Jesus was a man who believed himself to be the Son of God. . . . Now that we have weighed and found wanting those *soi-disant* saviours who have avowedly been mere men, let us turn, as our last recourse, to the saviours who have presented themselves as Gods'.



The lives of Shankara and Nanak, Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, and similar other torch-bearers of Truth tell the very same tale. They discovered new values and viewed the march of mankind from a higher platform of life. Everything has for them a meaning and a significance, which is foreign to an earth-bound eye of a rank materialist—a Marxist or a Machiavelli—whose vision can hardly go beyond the tip of his nose. Immured in the prison-house of his own passions and prejudices, such a materialist peacemaker can hardly get above personal predilections and sordid interests—political or other, and dictate real principles of peace to humanity. Time is ripe when one must rush out into the open from these peace-breakers' stuffy chambers to see the calm, radiant face of those God-men, the real peacemakers, who felt peace, lived in peace, diffused peace all around, and sacrificed all for the sake of peace.

It is these great seers of Light who discovered men not as men of mere flesh and blood but as children of Immortality (*amṛtasya putrāḥ*)—bringing with their discovery a new hope and a new assurance. They visualized the one universal principle that harmonizes all apparent contradictions and binds the entire universe with the golden chain of the Oneness of Being. In their eye, a man is not merely a man of flesh as he appears to be, but he is more than a man, as he bears within him the spark of the Infinite—the great Soul that governs the universe. This is the boldest utterance of the Indian Rishis and the dictate of Indian philosophy. Universal brotherhood, love for fellow beings, and the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice and service are but the natural outcome of such deeper understanding of this universal principle. This is the Magna Charta of peace which the bewildered world needs today. When a man or a nation runs mad for self-aggrandizement and brutally cuts the throats of others for the sake of earthly possessions, the gifts of these great God-men come as a saving revelation and show the golden vista to cry halt to the crescendo of murders and orgy of bloodshed that are tarnishing the pages

of human history from day to day in the holy name of peace. Peoples are off their balance today and, in their intoxication from pelf and power, do not know what they actually want. Peace will ever remain a phantom and a hope unless that introspection and poise which characterize the real discoverers of peace are cultivated and developed, unless steps are retraced to find out the real home of peace of which the war-mongers have become totally oblivious today. The Upanishads declare, 'One that sees the universal Reality within one's self enjoys everlasting peace and none else' (*tamātmastham ye anupaśyanti dhīrāsteṣām śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām* (*Kaṭha Up.*, V. 13)). That meditative calmness and purity of motives, that divine madness that casts off selfishness and material greed, and, above all, that spirit of sacrifice and universal love born of a deeper plunge into the core of Reality are the sterling possessions of spiritual giants who have changed the face of the world from time to time and have converted the war-arena into a garden of goodwill and peace. Let us look up to their noble teachings, their lives of inestimable value, and listen to their soul-enthraling voices that are calling ever and anon all fighters to their side. All distinctions of caste, creed, or colour vanish into air before their penetrating gaze and they feel all as part and parcel of their own being. There is no room for hatred in their scheme of life and no war in the march of their ideas. The golden sword of wisdom which they wield tears into shreds all veils of differentiation and brings into clear light harmony and peace and the real values of life. But it is the greatest tragedy in the drama of human existence that these teachers of humanity have been rolled back from the horizon of life to make room for political Titans for the solution of the problem of world peace! As a result, the entire humanity is standing today on a big precipice for a catastrophic fall into the abyss of death and darkness.

India must also play her significant role at this critical juncture. Truly has Swami Vivekananda said: 'Here is the same India

whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. . . . This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind'. But to be eligible for delivering the goods and to make her voice heard in the din and bustle of this great war of Kurukshetra, India should not only be spiritually and morally strong but must be politically alert, industrially efficient,

and materially great as well; for, no nation with weak-kneed impotence can play any useful role in the shaping of human destiny.

The voice of the great Rishis and Prophets of the world is still a potent force, as it is the song of the Soul immortal and the voice of Peace eternal. Let us hearken to their universal gospels and lofty messages and find out from the glowing pages of their great Book of Life the way out of this cataclysm that threatens to engulf the world today. Have we the patience to hear?

## DEATH AND DEATHLESSNESS

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

The problem of death may be approached for solution from two levels of experience, the theistic and the absolutistic. At the theistic level, the fear of death drives one to the feet of God. At the absolutistic level, no such fear arises, because that is the state of fearlessness (*abhaya*) and deathlessness (*amṛtyupada*).

Sri Ramana says in his *Poem on the Nature of Existence*:

'Those people, who have intense fear of death, seek as their refuge only the feet of the great Lord, who is without death and birth. Those who are dead to themselves, along with their adjuncts—will they harbour thought of death? They are deathless'.

The great turning-point in the life of Sri Ramana was itself made possible by the fear of death. One day, when he was seventeen and quite healthy, the fear of death seized him, and he took up the challenge. He dramatized death and worked out the consequences in his own mind. And the great discovery dawned upon him that the Self is untouched by death, that he is the deathless Self. Recalling this experience long

afterwards, for the benefit of spiritual aspirants, Sri Ramana says:

'The "I" or my "Self" was holding the focus of attention by a powerful fascination, from that time onwards. Fear of death had vanished at once and for ever. Absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right up to this time. Other thoughts may come and go like the various notes of a piece of music, but the "I" continues like the *Sruti* or the unvarying basic or fundamental note which accompanies and blends with all other notes'.<sup>1</sup>

One sees the face of death everywhere, and yet one does not want to die. The desire for deathlessness is universal. Then, there must be something wrong with the common-sense view of death. Meditation on death is an essential part of the discipline for the philosopher and the saint. The *Bhagavad Gita* includes the realization of the misery and defect of death among the ingredients of wisdom (*jñāna*).<sup>2</sup> To the question 'Is philosophy the practice of death?', Plato answers 'Yes', and adds that the philosopher is he who knows how to die with ease. Before proceed-

<sup>1</sup> See *Self-realization*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> XIII, 8.



ing to the land of Death, in order to make true the angry and unthinking words of his father, Nachiketas consoles his sire saying, 'Like corn does a mortal ripen; like corn does he spring to life again'.<sup>3</sup> If one understands the truth about death, one would be freed from the fear of death. This, however, comes only on the realization of the oneness of Self. In order to pave the way for that experience, the Shāstras urge man to seek refuge in God, so that death for him will lose its terror.

God, by common consent, is without birth and death. Even those faiths which believe in a changing God place Him beyond time. God is indestructible, and has no fear of death. One of the stories about Shiva is that He drank the poison emitted by the serpent Vāsuki when it was used as the rope in the process of the churning of the milk-ocean.<sup>4</sup> Alluding to this episode, a Hymn to Shiva, attributed to Shankaracharya, says:

'Is not this one great help enough, O Lord of souls! Seeing the assemblage of moving and non-moving beings resident in your stomach and resident without, in order to protect them, you placed in your throat the greatly flaming and fearful poison, as a remedy for preventing all the immortals from taking to their heels! You neither swallowed it nor spat it out'.<sup>5</sup>

In order to obtain ambrosia, the gods and the demons churned the milk-ocean with Mount Mandara as the churning rod and Vasuki as the rope. From the fangs of Vasuki came out the world destroying poison. To escape from its deadly effect, all began to flee, including the gods. Lord Shiva, then, gathered the poison in his palm and drank it. But He did not swallow it, in order that the beings located within His body may not perish; He retained the poison in His throat, thus receiving the epithets 'Śrī-kanṭha', 'Nīla-kanṭha', and 'Nīla-grīva' (He with the auspicious or blue throat).

The universal conception of God is that He protects those who seek Him as their refuge.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaṭha Up.*, I. 6.

<sup>4</sup> See *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Sivānandalaharī*, 31.

He is described as the Friend-in-need (*āpat-bāndhava*), Helper of the helpless (*anātharakṣaka*) and so on. During the 'blitz' in England, a hymn was composed and set to music. It began with the lines:

God is our refuge, be not afraid,

He will be with you all through the raid.<sup>6</sup>

Some pious people seem to welcome crises so that they may turn to God and seek His protection. At the end of the Mahābhārata war, when Sri Krishna asked Kunti to ask for a boon, she said, 'Let misfortune befall us ever'. An English woman of fifty-five, when asked if she ever prayed, said, 'Well, I do when I think I've got more trouble than I can handle. But it's got to be something very bad to make me pray.'

What can be worse than the fear of death? And to whom else can people go for refuge than to the One who is eternally free from death?

The story is told in the Purāṇas of Mārkaṇḍeya who, according to the decree of Destiny, was to die at the age of sixteen. He took refuge in Lord Shiva, and was saved from the clutches of death. He became immortal, an eternal youth of sixteen.

The fear of death comes to one only at the empirical level of plurality. Scripture declares: 'Verily, fear arises only from a second';<sup>7</sup> 'When, indeed, he makes but the smallest distinction in it (the Self), there is fear for him'<sup>8</sup> 'He who sees difference, as it were, here, goes from death to death'.<sup>10</sup> Fear (*bhaya*), plurality (*bheda*), and ignorance (*avidyā*) constitute a triad making for bondage. Fearlessness (*abhaya*) arises when the non-dual Self (*advaya-ātman*) is realized through knowledge (*jñāna*). The perception of an 'other', however attractive or friendly that 'other' may be for the time being, is the cause of fear. It is the sense of 'otherness' that is responsible for insecurity and all that goes with

<sup>6</sup> Mass-Observation, *Puzzled People* (Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1948), p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Mass-Observation, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> *Bṛhad. Up.*, I. iv. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Tait. Up.*, II. 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Kaṭha Up.*, IV. 10; *Bṛhad. Up.*, IV. 19.

it. And, otherness or difference is brought about by ignorance. The so-called individual wrongly imagines that he is a denizen of a pluralistic universe, identifies himself with a particular psycho-physical organism, and is expectant of danger from every quarter, including Time otherwise called Death. Physical death is not so terrible as it appears, and solves no problems. It is but a change like that from childhood to youth. The Self's identification with the ego and its adjuncts, which together constitute the carrier of the soul from one physical body to another—which

identification is, in fact, nescience or ignorance—is the root of all evil. It is the termination of this identification that constitutes *mokṣa* (liberation). This dying is truly auspicious. It is dying to live. When the ego dies, there is no more transmigration, no more sorrow. To the question 'When shall I be free?', Sri Ramakrishna answered 'When "I" shall cease to be'. To him who has attained freedom from the ego, there is no death; for he has realized that the real is the non-dual Spirit which suffers no change and is beyond the snares of time.

## CAN WE DISCARD RELIGION?

BY DR. S. C. CHATTERJI

There is at present a fairly wide-spread movement of thought which cuts the ground underneath religion and would consign it to oblivion. This is the communistic trend of philosophical thought. In the positivism of Auguste Comte a prediction was made that humanity would reach a future stage of thought and culture where religion would outgrow its utility and become a thing of the past. In the philosophy of communism, as expounded by Karl Marx and his followers, religion is declared to be not only useless but positively injurious as well. It is regarded as a tool in the hands of the capitalists to exploit the masses and as an opiate to make them forget or get reconciled to their miserable lot in the world. It is something which should be ruthlessly suppressed and totally abandoned. Hence it is that the saner section of the human race, which cherishes the religious faith, naturally asks the question: Can we discard religion?

Although the question is a simple one, yet the answer to it cannot be so simple. Any satisfactory answer to this question can be given only when we have answered two other

questions, namely, what is meant by 'religion' and what is meant by the word 'discard'. To discard a thing may mean either to reject it as worthless or to abandon the use of it. On the basis of these two meanings of the word 'discard', our first question resolves itself into two other questions: (i) Can we reject religion as something worthless, and (ii) Can we abandon the practice of religion? Communistic writers would have us discard religion in both senses of the word. They are emphatically of opinion that religion is both useless for and detrimental to the wider interests of mankind. The religious faith has its origin in conditions of poverty and ignorance. The churches in which it is enshrined have proved themselves, in history, to be the instruments of injustice and oppression, wielded by the wealthy class to deprive the poor and the illiterate of their legitimate rights and privileges. As such, the sooner religion is discarded by men and banished from human society the better it is for mankind.

Let us now face the question fairly and squarely, and consider what the right answer should be. The communistic arguments



against religion do not stand to reason. They are not, as they should be, based on the intrinsic character and merits of religion, but on the abuses which have been made of it by some religious persons and institutions. It may be that some people and their organizations have sometimes used, or rather misused, religion as a means of oppression and exploitation of the general mass of their fellow beings. But it is no less true to say that there are other religious souls and their institutions which have done greater good to human society and sacrificed their all to bring relief to suffering humanity. Nor, again, is it true to say that religion has its origin in conditions of poverty and ignorance. If in some cases we find religion among the poor and the illiterate, there are at least some historic instances in which religion has been founded and followed and preached by kings, princes, and great intellectuals of the world. The communistic generalization about religion, from some instances of its origin and application, is rather hasty and unwarranted. Further, to judge anything by reference to the conditions of its origin and its uses or misuses is not always to judge it properly and correctly. Rather it is to misjudge it in the wrong perspective of its external conditions and associations. The value and validity of a thing do not depend so much upon its origin and uses or abuses, as on its essential nature, its place in reality, and its relation to human life. These are the more important points which we have to consider with regard to religion before we are in a position to say whether we can discard it or not.

Religion consists in man's unique experience of the spiritual Reality that lies within him and beyond him. It is to be noted here that the religious experience is unique in the sense that it is easily distinguishable from all other types of human experience like the sensuous, the moral, and the aesthetic. In his religious life, man stands face to face with a supersensuous, spiritual Reality which is the ground and reason for the existence of the physical universe, but is not itself physical

or material. The way in which man has an experience of this spiritual Reality is quite distinct from that in which he has the sense-experience of physical objects. In his moral life, man is brought into certain social relations with his fellow beings who are his equals, and is interested in certain judgments about the goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness of their conduct and behaviour. There is here no trace of the feeling of awe and reverence for an intrinsically higher being, which characterizes the religious experience of man. It may be that in some cases we feel reverence for the moral excellence and perfection of some fellow beings. But even here it is to be observed that the moral experience in question is more of the nature of religious experience. We hold some sages and saints in reverence because we find, or at least believe in, the presence of certain divine characters and qualities in them. So also, man's aesthetic experience, although akin to the religious, is yet distinguished from it. In the one man does or does not enjoy what is beautiful or ugly, while in the other he enjoys the bliss of communion with the holy and the divine.

The unique spiritual experience which constitutes the soul of religion may, however, be expressed and embodied in different ways, in different cultures and civilizations. These give rise to different systems of ideas and beliefs, customs and practices, which distinguish the different historical religions of the world. The different creeds, dogmas, and practices which are connected with different religions are but the different ways in which different groups of men or different religious organizations and institutions embody the soul of religion. But once the spirit of religion is embodied in fixed forms and formulas in different religions, there arise clash and conflict between them. It is a conflict not between the original spiritual experiences which underlie all religions but between different dogmatic and institutional, communal and sectarian religions. It is here that the spirit of religion is sacrificed to certain un-



meaning forms and routine observances in different religions, and the followers of one creed or sect distrust and oppress those of another. Sometimes it so happens that such religions are utilized for political or communal ends and purposes. When religion is brought to such a pass, it ceases to exercise any beneficent influence on man's mind and becomes the means of tyranny and exploitation of the masses. If the spirit of sacrifice and service, of love and goodwill, be characteristic of religion in its original purity and beauty, that of jealousy, hatred, and selfishness is the natural outcome of sectarianism and communalism in religion. And, if by religion we mean such sectarian and communal religions, it is not only possible but very necessary to discard them for the good of mankind at large.

What has been said above with regard to institutional and dogmatic, or sectarian and communal religions is by no means true of religion as such. Religion, we have already said, is the expression of a unique spiritual experience through man's whole life and conduct. Man has this experience because both humanity and reality have a spiritual constitution. If religion as such is to be repudiated and discarded, reality must shed its spiritual character and man his spiritual constitution. So long as it is not proved that unconscious matter is the ultimate reality and man is a purely physical being or a conscious automaton, religion cannot be considered to be an opiate or an illusion cherished only by misguided, ignorant people. But if by reality we mean, as we must, that which is never and nowhere contradicted, then we are to say that Spirit is the ultimate reality of both man and the world. For, it is Spirit alone, as a self-conscious principle, that is not subject to the changes which overtake all things of the world including our body, mind, intellect, and ego. Now if man be a spiritual being, his spiritual experiences will be a natural thing for him. And, that man has really certain spiritual experiences appears clearly from the testimony of many saints and sages whose veracity cannot be reasonably doubted.

Hence we are led to the view that while religion as a matter of creed and dogma may be discarded, religion as the unique spiritual experience of man is a necessity for him and so can never be rejected as useless and worthless.

Let us now consider the question whether we can discard religion in the second sense of the word 'discard', that is to say, whether we can abandon the practice of religion. By the practice of religion we mean the performance of such things as prayer, worship, rite, ceremony, etc. The question, therefore, is: Can we give up the observance of the religious code of life? Our answer to this question is twofold. We say first that for ordinary religious men and women, the practice of religion is essential and very useful. It is through the careful and conscientious practice of religion that ordinary people become morally pure and spiritually enlightened. There is, generally speaking, no short cut to the Deity. The goal of religion, namely, God, must be approached through a strenuous and arduous course of moral and spiritual training. Religious practices and observances constitute the different steps in the training of man to make him a fit recipient of the grace of God and a participant in the bliss of communion with Him. Ordinarily, therefore, we cannot afford to dispense with the practice of religion.

Next, we are to observe that there are two exceptional conditions under which one may give up the practice of religion. When a man attains such spiritual perfection that a single thought of God or a mere utterance of His name is sufficient to evoke in him the highest religious emotions and sentiments, it is no longer obligatory on him to go through the routine of daily prayer and worship. The end being easily attained, the utility of the means and the necessity of their adoption naturally cease. So also, one who has gone high up the path of philosophic knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) and realized the identity of his Self with the Absolute, may feel no urge for performing the worship of a personal



Deity, i.e. God who is the highest for man's religious consciousness. Hence we conclude that religion as such, being rooted in the spiritual constitution of man, cannot be dis-

carded by him, although the practice of religion may, under certain special circumstances, be considered unnecessary and irrelevant.

## "THY NAME IS SILENCE"

By C. T. K. CHARI

Sri Ramakrishna is probably one of the best known figures of the nascent India. The growing spate of literature about him bears witness to that. Romain Rolland and Henri Bergson, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore have spoken of his greatness. Has he then been understood? But what an irresponsible question? Could he have endeared himself to millions if he was not understood? I wonder. Do we love only those we completely understand? The utter simplicity of Sri Ramakrishna's sayings conceals depths and profundities that the most daring metaphysician dare not plumb. Those who came to him loved him tenderly and yet they stood in awe of him. His experiences and thoughts were, not infrequently, alien to the ordinary human mind; they were opaque to human intelligence. Swami Vivekananda, who probably had more right to interpret the Master than most others, was asked on one occasion why he did not preach Sri Ramakrishna as an *avatāra*. He replied: 'Truly, I tell you, I have understood him very little. He appears to me to have been so great that, whenever I have to speak anything of him, I am afraid lest I ignore or explain away the truth, lest my little power does not suffice, lest in trying to extol him I present his picture by painting him according to my lights and belittle him thereby'.<sup>1</sup> The confession will startle those who have read merely the many unchastened volumes on Sri Ramakrishna. They will be not less startled if they ponder long enough on the Master's

teaching concerning God or Brahman. 'What Brahman is cannot be described. All things in the world—the Vedas, the Purānas, the Tantras, the six systems of philosophy—have been defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled in this way, and that is Brahman. No one has ever been able to say what Brahman is'. (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*).

What manner of man was he who could make these sweeping denials? By what authority did he make them? Are not the Vedas, the Puranas, the systems of philosophy, the sheet-anchor of Hindu religion? Are they? We are so firmly in the grip of the radical relativism of the historical method that, when we come to religion, we at once try to assimilate it to *our* ancestry, *our* scriptures, *our* social and cultural pattern, *our* nation, *our* era and *our* century. I make bold to say that Sri Ramakrishna went past these barriers taken singly and collectively. His apostrophe to God, 'Thy Name is Silence', can be paralleled only by the confessions of the greatest mystics and religious thinkers of all ages and climes. Dionysius the Areopagite said: 'Our speech is restrained in proportion to the height of our ascent; but when our ascent is accomplished, speech will cease altogether and be absorbed into the ineffable'.<sup>2</sup> 'I comprehend', Lao Tzu observed, 'the advantage of non-

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, p. 306 ('Conversations and Dialogues').

<sup>2</sup> *De Myst. Theo.*, cap. iii. *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, Eng. tr. by C. E. Rolt (S.P.C.K., London, 1920).



assertion and the lesson of silence'.<sup>3</sup> 'I beheld the ineffable fullness of God', Angela di Foligno testified, 'but I can relate nothing of it save that I have *seen* the fullness of Divine Wisdom wherein is all goodness'.<sup>4</sup> 'The most beautiful thing which man can say of God', according to Meister Eckhart, 'is that knowing His inner riches he becomes silent. Therefore prate not of God'.<sup>5</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, who (as Geismar told us long ago) accepted the essentials of the Christian faith embodied in the Athanasian creed, could say '... and so God loves silence. Silence in relation to God is strengthening. . . To talk in relation to God is a depletion. . .'.<sup>6</sup> 'What, O God', Nicholas of Cusa asked in his *De Visione Dei*, 'is my intellectual ignorance of thee, is it not an instructed ignorance?' And Dante<sup>7</sup> wrote:

'... O speech!

How feeble and how faint art thou to give  
Conception birth. Yet this, to what I saw,  
Is less than little. . .'.<sup>8</sup>

There is no need to seek a laboured justification of mysticism such as this by going to Hegel. To be sure, we can learn from him that 'if those who recognize Mysticism as the highest truth are content to leave it in its original utter mystery, their conduct only proves that for them too, as well as for their antagonists, thinking means abstract identifi-

<sup>3</sup> Citation by W. E. Hocking in his *Types of Philosophy* (Scribner's, N.Y., 1929), Ch. XXX, p. 382.

<sup>4</sup> Angela of Foligno, *Book of Divine Consolations* (New Medieval Library, London, 1908). Cf. Beatae Angelae de Fulginio, *Visionum et instructionum liber*, Colonia, 1851 (Bibliotheca mystica et ascetica), c. xxii. '... in quibus non videbam nisi tantum potentiam divinam, modo omnino inenarrabili'. ('... But in all this I could see nothing save the divine power in a manner completely beyond expression').

<sup>5</sup> Cited by Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism: East and West*, Part A, Ch. III.

<sup>6</sup> *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, translated and edited by Alexander Dru, 1384 (entry of 1854).

<sup>7</sup> *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 121-123. Eng. tr. by H. F. Cary (Cassell and Co., London, 1903).

<sup>8</sup> 'O quanto è corto il dire, e come fioco.

Al mio concetto! e questo, a quel ch'io vidi,  
E tanto, che non basta a dicer poco. . .'

cation, and that in their opinion, therefore, truth can only be won by renouncing thought, or as it is frequently expressed, by leading the reason captive'. But 'the reason-world may be equally styled mystical,—not however because thought cannot both reach and comprehend it, but merely because it lies beyond the compass of understanding'.<sup>9</sup> Now I do realize that *Vernünftiges* may transcend the limits of *Verstand*. 'Verily', Kierkegaard commented,<sup>10</sup> 'we do not need Hegel to tell us that relative contradictions can be mediated'. But that *Vernünftiges* should ever prove capable of being designated as the mystical in any worthy sense I cannot admit.<sup>11</sup> If Sri Ramakrishna was right, God lies beyond the *reach* and not only the *grasp* of thought. That is why His Name can never be defiled.

But is not the absolutely inscrutable the absolutely inaccessible or the sheerly meaningless? By no means. That is just one of the *a priori* assumptions of speculative philosophers which can be questioned.<sup>12</sup> The Absolute of mystical experience is a plenitude falling beyond the most massive, the most comprehensive, the most coherent system that reason may construct for itself. To find It, we must dig deeper into the ultimate conditions of awareness than ever Hegelians or Neo-Hegelians did. To glimpse something of the sweeping grandeur of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, we must turn, not to German and Anglo-American Idealism, but to the Classi-

<sup>9</sup> *The Logic of Hegel* (Eng. tr. by W. Wallace, Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1892), Ch. VI, §82, p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> *Journals*, 286.

<sup>11</sup> I here emphatically dissent from N. O. Lossky, *Mystical Intuition*, p. 28. Cf. his article 'Hegel als Intuitivist', *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie*, 1935. See my criticism of the Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian approaches to mysticism in my paper 'On the Denial of the Law of Excluded Middle' in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (July 1951), esp. pp. 68-73.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*; C. A. Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism* (Yale University Press, 1923), esp. Part II, Ch. VIII, pp. 103-110; *The Dilemma of Religious Knowledge* (Yale, 1931), esp. Ch. I.



cal Russian Ontology<sup>13</sup> drawing its inspiration from the mysticism of the Eastern Church; to Vladimir Soloviev's doctrine of 'all-unity' in which every empirical manifestation is dependent on the Divine Being that permeates it; to N. O. Lossky's Absolute which cannot be a member of any determinate complex;<sup>14</sup> to S. L. Frank's *La connaissance et l'être*<sup>15</sup> which represents *l'être* as flowing far, far beyond *connaissance* with its laws of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle; to Léon Shestov's 'Night of Gethsemene' which transcends all relativities. To seek confirmation of mystical teaching in Kierkegaard's 'existentialism' may be to seek it in the most unexpected quarter. 'There is a view of the world', he wrote, 'according to which the paradox is above every system'.<sup>16</sup> 'The thing is we cannot form any idea of God's exaltation. We always get stuck in our aesthetic accountancy; the marvellous, the great, the far-reaching, etc.'. <sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the characteristic features of this *Weltanschauung*, the prevailing ignorance of which has, in my opinion, resulted in utterly inadequate appraisals of Oriental mysticism, see S. L. Frank's paper 'Contemporary Russian Philosophy' in *Philosophy To-day*, edited by E. L. Schaub (Open Court, 1929). Cf. Frank's 'Die russische Weltanschauung', supplement to *Kant-Studien*, Band 32 (1927). Cf. L. M. Lopatin, 'The Philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev' in *Mind*, N.S., 100, October 1916; Mrs. J. N. Duddington, 'The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov' in *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 3. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari's single paragraph, devoted to Russian mysticism, in his recently published *Mystics and Mysticism* (Sri Krishna Library, Madras, 1951, p. 140), is too short to convey any adequate notion about its ontological implications or its peculiar importance for Oriental mysticism. Frank regards the Russian approach as opposed to the West-European idealistic and rationalistic traditions.

<sup>14</sup> *The Intuitive Basis of Knowledge* (Macmillan, 1919), Ch. VIII; *The World as Organic Whole* (Oxford University Press, 1928), Ch. V; *Mystical Intuition*, esp. I, 'The Cognitive Value of Mystical Experience', pp. 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> The French translation of the Russian *Predmet Znaniya* ('The Object of Knowledge').

<sup>16</sup> *Journals*, 282. Cf. 153.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 997.

Sri Ramakrishna was, comparatively speaking, an unlettered man. Nevertheless, I assert and maintain that he unfolded the ultimate presupposition and the goal of metaphysics. Speculative philosophy in the true sense can *live* only by perpetually trying to exhaust mystical intuition and ever failing to do so. It can move only by trying to conceive the inconceivable. We have here the possibility of endless progress and also an irremovable obstacle at any and every stage of speculative analysis and discovery. Knowledge is indefinitely corrigible or infinitely perfectible, judgments can go on correcting themselves, because there is awareness of That which is incommensurable with them. The mystical paradox underlies all consciousness or awareness.<sup>18</sup> Negation has a unique part to play in metaphysics; for through it alone metaphysics realizes her high destiny.<sup>19</sup> 'At every stage', as Kierkegaard put it,<sup>20</sup> 'philosophy sloughs a skin into which creep its worthless hangers-on'. As Giacomo Leopardi pointed out, the assertion 'All is Nothing' (*tutto è nulla*) will collapse into verbiage or meaninglessness unless the mode of assertion be such as to indicate that the words (which, by themselves, are 'errori')

<sup>18</sup> For this epistemological approach, see my article 'The Challenge of Mysticism' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, October 1951.

<sup>19</sup> C. A. Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, Ch. II. Cf. Max Horkheimer's interesting remarks in his *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1947). 'Negation plays a crucial role in philosophy'. 'Each school is equally confident about its own thesis and hostile to the method of negation inseparably bound up with any philosophical theory that does not arbitrarily stop thinking at some point in its course'. (pp. 182-183). Aegidius Jahn maintains that 'our scepticism with regard to most of the categories can never be too extreme'. *The Silver World* (George Allen & Unwin, 1937), p. 4. Paul Cohen-Portheim insists that 'all attempts to make the truth comprehensible distort and detract from it. . . .'. *The Message of Asia* (Eng. tr. by Alan Harris, Duckworth, London). The last two writers acknowledge that the mystical philosophers of India have been pioneers in this dialectic. Jahn, p. 291.

<sup>20</sup> *Journals*, 99.



are an expression of the ultimate truth which has been experienced, lived, or felt (*sentito*), not simply known. It is thus that negation or darkness solidified—the 'real and solid shade' (*ombra reale e salda*)—becomes the mystical image of reality.<sup>21</sup> 'Inscrutable is All' (*arcano è tutto*). 'The objective accent', Kierkegaard insisted, 'falls on what is said; the subjective accent on how it is said'. To expend our cleverness, ingenuity, imagination, sophistication, and cultivated scholarship on religion is all very well. But, like Kierkegaard's Taciturnus,<sup>22</sup> we have to discover that 'the same water at the same place is so shallow that a sheep can wade it, and so deep that an elephant can swim'. God, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is accessible to the unlearned and the learned.

I suggest that Pfeiderer's criticism that mysticism empties consciousness of all its contents and Vacherot's censure<sup>23</sup> that it frequently rests on a principle which represents the utmost degree of abstraction betray a radical misapprehension of the 'Divine Nothing' which, in mystical teaching, ranks as the Absolute Fullness of Being. Dean Inge, notwithstanding his severely critical attitude to Oriental mysticism, grants that 'The Greeks had no symbol for zero and could not anticipate Scotus Erigena's dictum that the Godhead or Absolute *non-immerito Nihilum vocatur*'.<sup>24</sup> The Christian Church has frowned and still frowns at mysticism. But there is no gainsaying the fact that Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, Jacopone da Todi and many others apprehended God 'the Infinite and the Unincarnate' as the 'Onefold and

the Ineffable'. Julian of Norwich<sup>25</sup> discovered that 'No soul is rested until it is noughted of all that is made'. 'The Soul', St. John of the Cross taught,<sup>26</sup> 'must not only be disencumbered from that which belongs to the creatures, but likewise, as it journeys on, it must be annihilated and detached from all that belongs to its spirit'. It attains to its union with God by passing through the 'night of the senses' and the 'night of the intellect'; it renounces all its modes.<sup>27</sup> Al-Ghazzali tells us that 'The Science of the Sufis aims at detaching the heart from all that is not God. . .'.<sup>28</sup> What Hegel<sup>29</sup> said of philosophy may be said with far greater justification of mystical intuition. In its inward essence 'there are neither predecessors nor successors'. Just as little talk of 'constant improvements' can there be as of 'peculiar views' of mysticism.

<sup>25</sup> *Revelations of Divine Love*, edited by Grace Warrack (London, 1901).

<sup>26</sup> *The Spirit of Flame: A Study of St. John of the Cross* by Prof. Allison Peers (Student Christian Movement Press Ltd., 1943), pp. 120-121.

<sup>27</sup> J. Baruzi, *Saint Jean de la Croix et le problème de l'expérience mystique* (2nd edition, Paris, 1931), pp. 386, 479, 486, 504, 611. St. John of the Cross, who came to be known as 'Doctor of the Nothing' (*Doctor de la Nada*), was really 'Doctor of the All' (*Doctor del Todo*). Cf. Prof. Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 96f. He who renounces all gains all. A few months before his death, when he had been deprived of all official standing in the Order, when his health was shattered, when contumely and misrepresentation assailed him on all sides, and he was banished to a lonely little house at La Peñuela, St. John of the Cross wrote to a nun: 'As to my affairs, daughter, let them not trouble you, for none of them trouble me. . . . Think only that God ordains all'. To a disciple he wrote: 'Son, let not this grieve you. . . . I am quite prepared to amend my ways in all where I have strayed, and to be obedient, whatever penance they give me'. This great Christian saint, by his life, proved the dictum of Plotinus: 'All those things in which (the soul) once took pleasure, power, strength, wealth, beauty, science, it now says that it holds in contempt. It would not say this if it had not come upon something better than these'. *Enneads*, VI. 7. 34.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Confessions of Al-Ghazzali* (Eng. tr. by Claud Field).

<sup>29</sup> *Werke*, I. 165.

<sup>21</sup> *The Poems of Leopardi*, edited by G. L. Bickersteth (Cambridge University Press, 1923), Introduction, pp. 91-92; p. 103, foot-note, Cf. F. A. Aulard's 'Essai sur les idées philosophiques et l'inspiration poétique de Leopardi' in *Poésies et oeuvres morales de Leopardi*, Vol. I.

<sup>22</sup> *Stages on Life's Way* (Tr. by W. Lowrie, Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 363.

<sup>23</sup> *Histoire critique de l'école d'Alexandrie*.

<sup>24</sup> *Philosophy*, Vol. X, No. 38 (April 1935), p. 152.



Mystical intuition beholds itself as one and the same. The category of time is disabled right from the start and in a manner wholly different from that in which it is discredited in Western idealism. It is neither unequivocally affirmed nor unequivocally denied. Spirit is neither in time nor out of it.<sup>30</sup> Böhme's description of God is the paradoxical 'To Whom time is as eternity and eternity is as time freed from all strife'.<sup>31</sup> 'Thy Name is Silence': The

apostrophe makes Sri Ramakrishna a representative not of Hindu mysticism alone but of mysticism at large.

(To be continued)

Cited by Nicholas Arseniew, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church* (Student Christian Movement, London, 1926), p. 115. Cf. Angelus Silesius' *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, I. 177, 183, 185; II. 109, 111, 114. I cannot undertake here an extended enquiry into the mystical doctrine of time or exhibit its curious affinity to Kierkegaard's dialectical treatment of the problem, for example in his *Consider the Lilies* (2nd part of the 'Edifying Discourses'), Eng. tr. by A. S. Aldworth and W. S. Ferrie, (C. W. Daniel and Co., Ltd., London, 1940), II, pp. 50-52.

<sup>30</sup> See my paper in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, July 1951.

<sup>31</sup> 'Wem Zeit wie Ewigkeit  
Und Ewigkeit wie Zeit,  
Der ist befreit  
Von allem Streit'.

## FROM THE OLD WORLD TO THE NEW

BY A WANDERER

I have had the supreme privilege of visiting many places of interest in India—places of pilgrimage, of historical importance, of good scenic view, and so on. I have travelled the length and breadth of India and my wandering tendency thus being appeased I felt I should not travel any more. But destiny willed it otherwise. One afternoon I found myself in Bombay ready to sail for America the next evening. I was surprised at the configuration of circumstances which had led to this event, and I was even more surprised to find myself about to sail.

I had come from Calcutta. At the Railway Station in Bombay I had a lot of trouble regarding my luggage and thus got a foretaste of what travelling abroad would mean. Greater trouble was experienced the next day when I was embarking the boat. Fortunately I had friends at the pier who greatly minimized my difficulties.

*Himalaya* was the name of the boat by which I was going. I had been long in the Himalayas. Therefore to find that this was

the name of the boat by which I was to leave the shores of India gave me a great thrill. So I would be in the 'Himalaya' again for a fortnight or so! What a great association the name has—specially to Hindu minds; what memories it calls up when one thinks about it! It is said that Swami Vivekananda was once asked in the West why it was that people in India had so much religious inclination. At this the great monk looked grave and replied, 'Well, we have the great Himalaya mountains in India'. I remember that later, after four days at sea, I went ashore at Aden and as I was returning to the boat in the evening I saw from a distance the big letters of the word 'Himalaya' blazoned in electric lights at the top of the boat. My mind at once flew to the peaceful abode in the bosom of those great mountains where I had formerly lived. The thought instantaneously lifted me out of my surroundings and for a while I lived in the past. I heaved a deep sigh. What a difference!

But to return to Bombay—we were to travel

by the *Himalaya*, a P. & O. boat, to Tilbury, near London. We boarded the ship in the evening. There was some difficulty about dinner as, being busy with the friends who came to see us off, we were very late in going to the dining saloon. However, there was some makeshift arrangement made for us. Some of us fretted at the inconvenience. . . . Why should we fret? Were we not wrong in being late? Did that not cause inconvenience to others? But it is also true that everything can be carried to extremes. A Chinese writer some time ago wrote that the three curses of Western civilization are Punctuality, Efficiency, and Success. He wrote, of course, humorously, but is there not some truth behind the statement? How much racking of nerves is there to keep up the high standard of things which, after all, are not vitally related to life! They disturb the even flow of life rather than bring poise and peace to it.

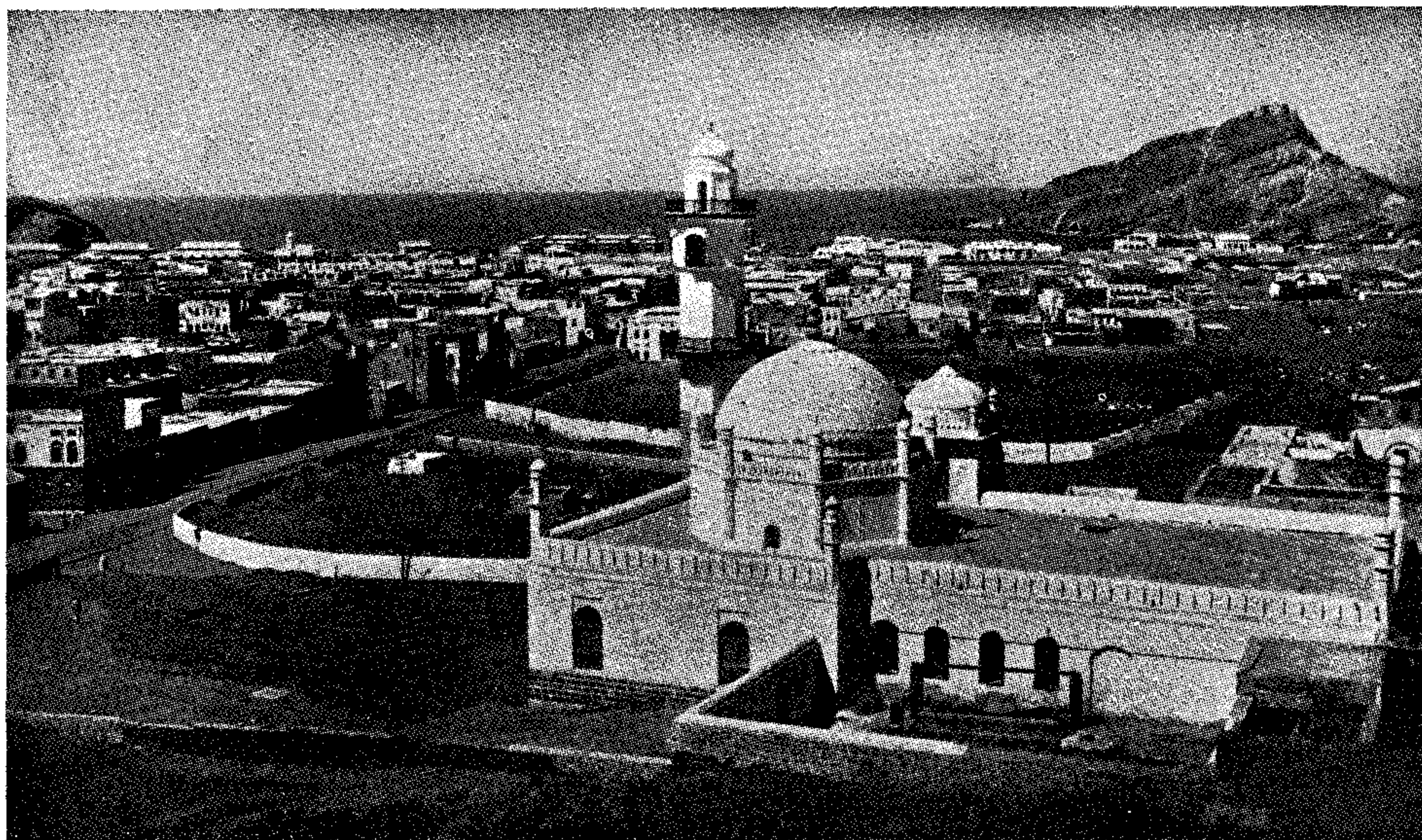
Though we embarked in the evening, the boat was not to start until early the next morning. I was eager to see the last glimpse of Bombay (or of India?). So I got up very early in the morning. But I was too late. The boat had come away a long distance. I could see only the cluster of lights (in the city) which had a magic look in the twilight of the morning hours across the blue waters of the Arabian Sea.

We were in an English boat. So we had to conform to the manner and the mode of living of the West. Accustomed to the free and simple life of a wanderer, I had considerable difficulty in doing this. Each nation or country has a particular way of living. Each follows a particular method with respect to eating food, wearing clothes, and so on. When a nation becomes very strong and powerful, it enforces its manners on other nations, or the latter submit to them from a sense of inferiority, or for the sake of convenience. But there is no denying the fact that there should be a common basic standard for the sake of convenience—specially at a time when, with easy means of communication, no nation can remain or afford to live

isolated from the rest of the world. Unfortunately some fuss about it is still in existence, and a visitor from the East, unaccustomed to the Western mode of living, feels its pressure.

When we left the shores of Bombay, we were altogether in the Western atmosphere. Most of the passengers were Westerners; there was only a sprinkling of Indians, with one or two Ceylonese. This was the first time that I saw from close quarters, or by staying with them, what kind of life people in the West live. Before that I had read about them, heard about them, and only casually had occasion to mix with them in India. Formerly they were amongst us in India, now I was in their midst, in their own environment. Of course the life in a boat does not fully reflect the life of any people. In the boat the passengers are in a holiday mood and enjoy an air of freedom. I felt a great stranger in the environment that I was now in. But this was a great advantage, for with the detachment of a bystander I could observe their lives and ways of thinking. How joyous and virile they were! Even the older ones! It seemed they were out to enjoy life to the fullest extent. To break the monotony of staying in the boat, they arranged various sports and games in which many of the passengers took part in one way or another. There were music, dancing, fancy-dress fun, and many other such things. But were they really enjoying life? Could they get anything worth having from it? Or were they simply trying to drown the problems of life in a round of excitements? From the conversations I had with some of the passengers I could not get any impression that they were interested in the deeper problems of life. Nor did they seem to have any interest in the higher forms of culture and refinement. Everything was superficial or lip service. How long can one enjoy life in this way? Soon life will seem barren, and actions fruitless. One can drown the reaction of one excitement by another exciting pastime, but sooner or later one will have to face life in its naked reality. And then?





A VIEW OF ADEN

Stopping at Aden for a few hours, the boat reached the Red Sea on the sixth day of our journey, and we were at Suez two days later. We could not see much of the Suez Canal, as the boat passed through it at night. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869. It is about a hundred miles in length. When the boat passes through the canal the pilot is changed. At Port Said we could see from the boat, on the left hand side, the magnificent statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps, architect of the Canal.

We feared that the Mediterranean Sea would be rough and that there would be heavy rocking of the boat resulting in the seasickness of many passengers. Fortunately the sea was almost calm. And I missed the opportunity of experiencing what seasickness means.

On entering the Mediterranean we recalled the events that took place here and round about during the last war. So many engines of destruction invented by human brains were active here day and night for a long period. Passenger ships could not pass through. Human life had no value. Thousands of persons fell victims to the ravages of national

hatred and the bid for power and supremacy. It seemed for a time that the clock of culture and civilization went backwards and that the world was coming to an end. Man can transform himself into a God. Man can degrade himself to a demon. It is a pity that both forces are there in the world. At one time a Buddha or a Christ comes to the world just to show mankind to what a divine height a man of flesh and blood can rise. At another time there comes a Nadir Shah, a Chingiz Khan, an imperialistic monarch, or an ambitious political leader who leaves to history examples of the worst brutality that the human mind can conceive of. Can we not have the former type without the latter?

When one has read and heard much about historical places, on actually seeing them—especially for the first time—they wear a new meaning, they become living personalities, as it were. So when we were passing through the Mediterranean and by Gibraltar and saw a glimpse of Spain and Portugal, each gave me great joy like that of meeting an intimate friend. The boat passed very close to Portu-



gal. That was the first land of Europe I saw. How many things come to one's mind on such an occasion! The history of Europe and its culture, how Indian thought travelled to Europe in the past, how European thought is now trying to dominate the world and how that has given rise to many conflicts, and so on. When one travels abroad one becomes a citizen of the world for the time being, and one can see and judge different nations and countries in right perspective.

Exactly after fifteen days' journey at sea, we arrived at Tilbury from where we were to go to London. Disembarkation and releasing our luggage from the customs office took nearly three hours. From the port to London we drove by car. The streets, houses, and trees on both sides seemed very familiar because we had seen many such pictures of England from the time of our school days. We were in foggy London with occasional drizzling rain. We had only five days at our disposal before we were to sail again for America, and in the meantime we planned to go to Paris. So we were in a hurry to see as much of London as possible.

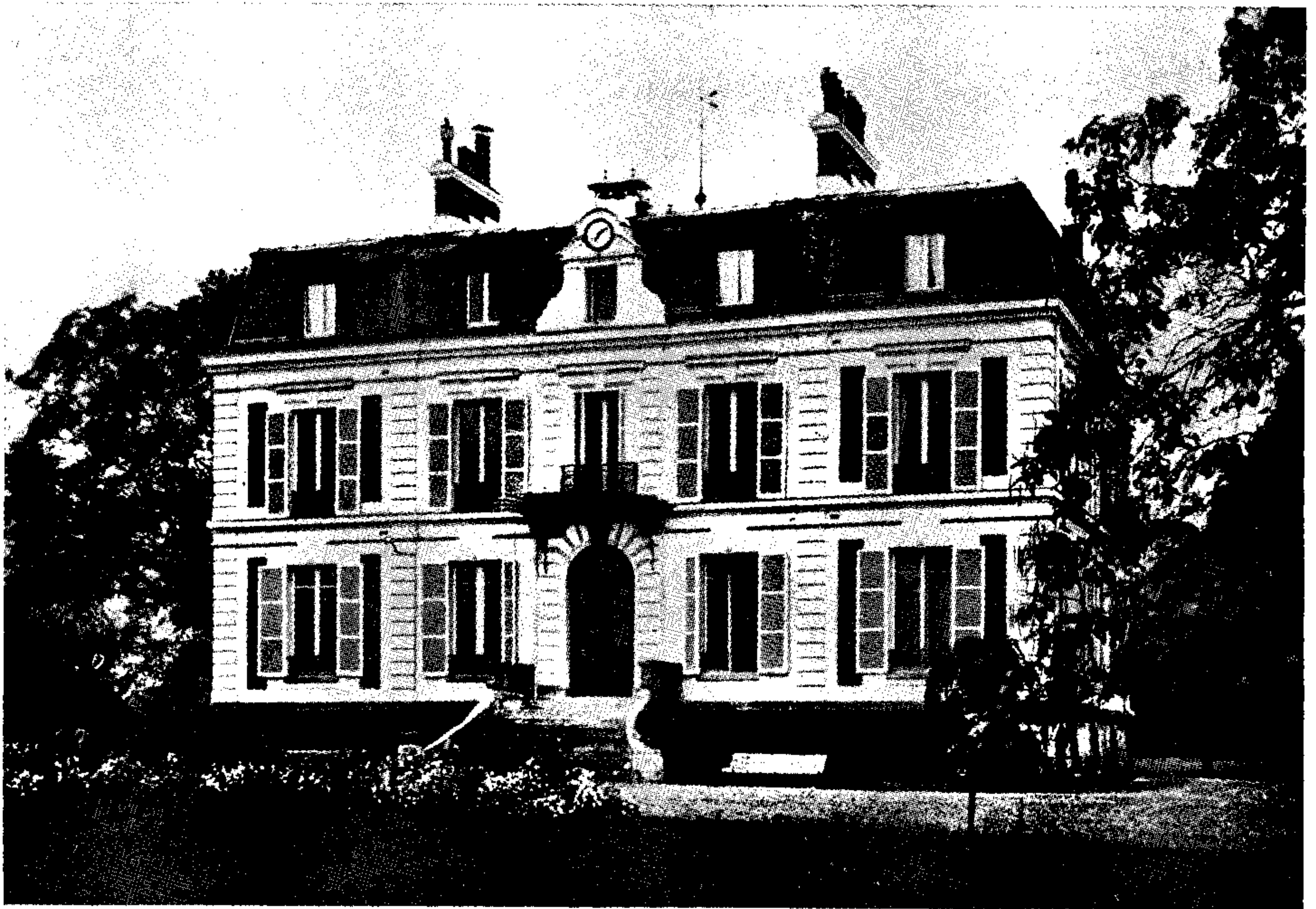
The next morning we saw the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, Lambeth Palace (where the Archbishop of Canterbury lives), Westminster Bridge (about which we read in the poems of Wordsworth in our student days). In the afternoon we saw the National Art Gallery and the British Museum—everything in a hurry to our great regret. As we approached Buckingham Palace we found a lot of people standing there. When we inquired why so many had flocked there, we learnt that the King would come out at that time and these people were eager to see him. We were surprised to know that the people had so much personal regard for the King even in these changing times. But each country develops its own traditions which persist in spite of the influence of circumstances.

In our boyhood we read a poem in Bengali ridiculing those Indians who were too enamoured of England and English ways. The first line of the poem read: 'The land in

England is after all made of earth and not of gold'. So one should not be unbalanced in one's admiration and regard for England. Two World Wars have undermined the prestige of England. And after the independence of India, Indians have ceased to regard everything English with awe. Was it, after all, subjective, that everything we saw in London seemed to have no glamour about it? A few things surely stirred up our imagination, but they awakened in us a historical sense more than any feeling of personal or national adoration. All of a sudden we developed the *Gita* attitude of supreme indifference or detachment to life!

The marks of the War were still visible in the dilapidated buildings of England that have not yet been repaired. Even after five or six years one can see what great havoc German air raids did to London. But how much grit and determination the English people showed in not being cowed! A nation lives, grows, and prospers because it has some supreme qualities. But England has now fallen on evil days. She has to struggle against so many handicaps to solve so many problems. On the boat we had pretty good food. That was not possible in London. Many important foodstuffs were rationed. One cannot say that this has not given rise to dissatisfaction among the people. Our guide—a well-informed, cultured man—was narrating how the Labour Government had failed to fulfil many of the promises it had made, and for that people were losing faith in it. We did not pay much heed to his words. For we knew that the masses are led by propaganda and they cannot realize the difficulties against which any Government, however well-intentioned, has to fight. Does not the same discontent exist in India? Our guide had an ethical understanding of the problems of the world. While recounting the hardships the English people were going through, he said, 'The root cause of the trouble in the world is jealousy, greed, and love of power. So long as man is not better, evils will exist in the world, and people will have to suffer'. We were surprised at these





CENTRE VEDANTIQUE RAMAKRISHNA

unexpected words of wisdom falling from his lips.

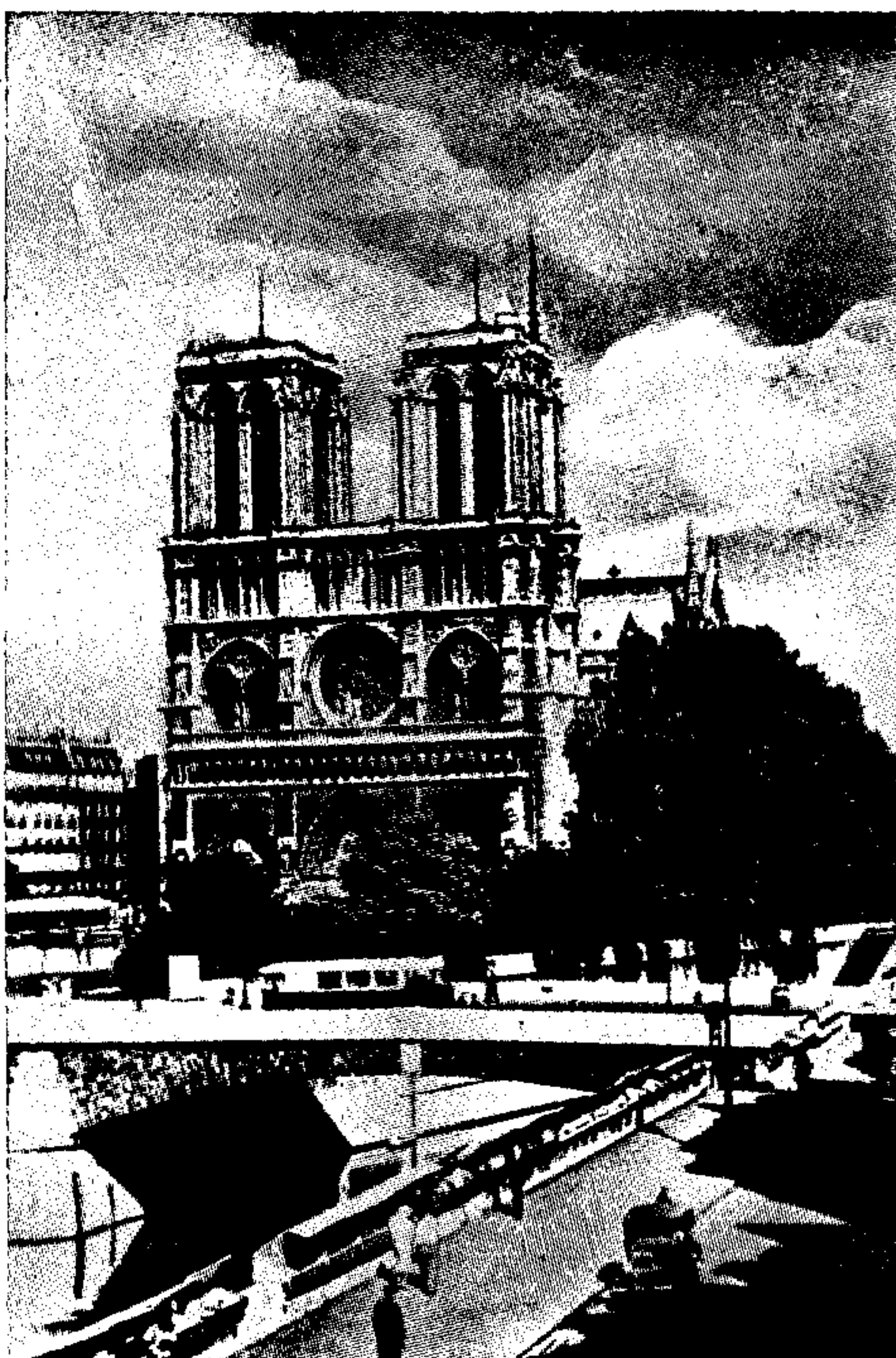
More than anything else in England I was eager to see an English village and the slums in London, just to know how the poor people live there in comparison with similar folk in India. So the next morning we started for a place called Denham, about twenty miles from London. But it could not be called a village, for more amenities of life could be found there than in many small towns in India. Everything was so neat and clean. There was a church which was built in the sixteenth century and which administered to the spiritual needs of the so-called villagers. By special request we had the church doors opened, went inside and sat there for a while. There was no rich paraphernalia as was seen in some city churches. Everything was so simple and at the same time so neat. It was a very quiet spot. It had such a good atmos-

phere. Yes, religion thrives in simplicity. The pride of wealth and display of riches simply wither it away.

We saw a primary school, housed in a nice building, where free milk and lunch were supplied to the boys. Their health was regularly examined. There was even a special dentist for them. On inquiry we learnt that a portion of the expenses of the school was borne by the county, and the rest was given by the Government.

We approached a house which seemed to be a poor man's cottage. We met the two elderly men who owned it. Hearing of our curiosity to see how they lived, they took us inside. The house was four hundred years old. Passing through various hands it had come to them. In comparison with others, they were poor, but they were very healthy and sturdy-looking. It did not seem that poverty had any depressing effect on them.





CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME

They had on their tables some books—two or three dealing with religion—and a newspaper. So they were up to date as regards general knowledge.

In the evening we started for Paris, to reach there next morning. Over the English Channel, our train was carried bodily on the boat. So our sleep was not disturbed. From Paris we drove to Gretz, a distance of about twenty-two miles, and put up at the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna. After struggling hard to adjust ourselves to Western conditions and modes for more than a fortnight it was a relief to be here. For in the Centre pervaded the atmosphere of an Indian Ashrama. The institution was situated in a fine, quiet spot. There was a beautiful shrine which was made a living reality through the devotion and earnestness of the members and students.

While the East revolts against the imperialistic domination of some Western nations, is it not surprising to see how Indian thought is slowly and silently penetrating into the life of the West? It is spreading on its own strength; not through the help of any material power—political or economic, but through its being able to fulfil some vital need of the soul. People are attracted because they find peace and solace, their hearts are soothed and minds strengthened. There is no compulsion or persuasion. Of their own accord people come; with perfect freedom of choice they identify themselves with the cause. We were surprised to see and hear of the influence the Centre has over a very wide circle of people, not only in France but in other European countries as well.

It was a pity that our programme allowed us to stay only for two days in this place.



WESTMINSTER ABBEY



But it cast so great a spell on us that we could hardly think of visiting even Paris where there are so many things of importance to see. We did visit Paris, but rather reluctantly!

It was such a great joy to visit the Indian Embassy in Paris and to talk with some of the officers. They were also very glad to receive us. They showed us how they were working. Incidentally they discussed with us some of the cultural activities which India should undertake in relation to foreign countries.

We were greatly impressed by the Cathedral of Notre Dame which may be called the 'Spiritual Centre' of the capital of France. It was built in the twelfth century and is a masterpiece of medieval art. Inside the building we saw some people saying their prayers. Their devotion was manifest in their faces.

We visited also the Palais Du Louvre which houses countless valuable art treasures. Unfortunately, we had to see them so hurriedly, for want of time, that we could see very little. Nevertheless some of the paintings moved us greatly. No wonder the Louvre is a great source of attraction to every visitor to the city of Paris.

Returning from Paris we could stay only one day in London. We spent a good deal of time in seeing Westminster Abbey which

has an atmosphere of its own. Sitting here quietly for some time, one is automatically led to think of the deeper aspects of life. The Abbey is associated with the memory of hundreds of great men—poets, politicians, thinkers, writers; where are they now? Only a name is left behind! Such is the empty breath of life for which man struggles and spends his whole energy.

We saw also the Indian Embassy in London. They are doing some cultural work as well. They have a free reading room in which newspapers and journals from India are kept. In

some rooms were pictures and paintings of Indian scenes. At the time we were there, a film on Kashmir was shown and was well attended.

In the evening we attended a meeting organized by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre of London. The audience was small, but the earnestness and the rapt attention with which the members listened to the speakers brought pointedly home to me how great is the responsibility of those who go abroad to preach Indian religion and culture.

The following morning we went by car to Southampton—a distance of eighty miles from London—to catch the boat for New York. Here we could see the beautiful scenery of country places in England—big fields ploughed



STATUE OF LIBERTY



by tractors, healthy cattle grazing, small and big houses on both sides. When we saw these things, irresistibly did we remember the conditions in Indian villages where things are getting worse and worse from day to day.

We were travelling by the ship *Queen Elizabeth* of the Cunard White Star Line. It is the biggest passenger ship in the world. It is one-fifth of a mile in length. Its gross tonnage is 83,673 and it has 4,000 miles of wire. It has a crew of 1,200, and the number of passengers it can carry is about 2,300. It is, as they say, one of the most majestic enterprises in the history of British engineering and is one of the finest examples of tenacity and courage in the story of Britain's conquest of the sea. It is like a floating town. It has almost all the amenities of a town including as many as three banks. It was astonishing to see how everything was organized and done with a very high degree of efficiency. It was almost the last word in comfort in a ship. Seeing all this, we thought within ourselves: What marvellous powers of organization these people have! Has this no meaning? Has it not a great lesson to teach others?

It took us five days to cross the Atlantic. Some days the sea was quite rough. Some of the passengers were seasick. Fortunately I escaped and could enjoy the sight of the rolling waves dashing against the boat and throwing up spray all around.

On the sixth morning we entered the Hudson River. As I was busy with the formalities before the Immigration Officer, I could not see the Statue of Liberty which welcomes travellers to New York.

After a while I landed in New York, the largest city in the world, with a population of eight million souls. New York is a city of magnificent buildings and skyscrapers, the highest building—the Empire State Building—being nearly a quarter of a mile high. In New York there are 43,000 electric lifts which carry seventeen and a half million passengers up and down daily. There are nine million miles of telephone wire, and seventy million letters are daily carried by the mail. There are 18,000 policemen who walk 31,000 miles of streets. When I saw these things I was simply amazed.

I have now been nearly nine months in the States. Many Americans ask me abruptly, 'How do you like New York? How do you like America?' Well, it is very difficult to say anything in a short answer. Everything has its good and bad sides. Unmixed evil and unalloyed good are not to be found in this world of relative existence. When I look at the healthy appearance of the people, the joyous faces of the children, and see the amenities of life they enjoy, I marvel at the way they have solved the problems of life. But are comforts—automobiles and telephones, radios and television, well laid out parks and long, clean highways—everything in life? It is too early for me to give my opinion of America. A nation cannot be so virile and strong, resourceful and determined, unless it has some innate qualities. What are they?

But in many respects I long for the sights and sounds of India, in spite of its stark poverty and wretched misery. There is something there which you cannot get anywhere in the world.

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'Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come to the Lord. This is what all the masters said and did.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# SCIENCE AND MODERN EDUCATION

BY P. S. NAIDU

The atom bomb has given a rude shock to our self-complacency. Men and women who laboured under the delusion that the advent of science ushered in an era of peace, plenty, and unlimited progress towards perfection, have been suddenly awakened from their dreams. And one begins to wonder whether there is not an element of evil inherent in scientific discoveries and inventions. Of course, the protagonist of science will deny vehemently any such implication in the 'blessings' which science is supposed to confer on humanity. But the uncomfortable thought that science is not altogether blameless in the present crisis haunts even the most ardent champions of science. These good men excuse themselves and the field of knowledge which they cultivate by saying that science cannot and should not be held responsible for the misuse of its discoveries. The results of science are amoral. It is the *use* to which you, non-scientists, put them that turns them into agencies for moral or immoral consequences, and you, the non-scientists, the politicians and statesmen in particular, who are to blame for the present chaos in the world and not the atom bomb. At the same time the scientists admit that man's moral nature has not kept pace with the rapid advance of his intellect. Man's head has developed enormously, while his heart is lagging behind. We agree. Man has a swelled head. But who is to blame for this disproportionate development of one limb at the expense of the others? I have no hesitation in answering that it is science.

When one makes a careful psychological study of the effect which science teaching has on minds of boys and girls at school, one cannot but come to the conclusion that seeds of aggression, egotism, and intolerance are sown by science in the plastic and fertile minds of

young pupils. Add to this the dogmatic denial by science of the great values of life, particularly spiritual values, then one cannot but accuse science of steadily guiding young men and women along wrong lines of thinking and acting.

An impartial student of science, of its psychology and philosophy, feels bewildered when on the one hand, he sees the help which science has given man in making his environment comfortable and easy for living and also in developing his body as well as his mind, and on the other, notices the devastating effect which science has had on his soul. It was, therefore, felt necessary by a very small group of thoughtful people that the foundations of science teaching should be analysed to discover where exactly the danger point is located. And this article sets forth the result of that analysis.

The questions that we have to ask ourselves in this context are: what are the aims which the teacher has in view when he teaches science? Are these the right aims? If they are not, then what should be the right aims? It may be said, in answer, that the ordinary teacher of science has no specific aim in teaching science. He is unaware of the psychological and philosophical foundations of science and is only concerned with the task of covering the course and preparing the pupils for the examination ahead. This is perhaps true, yet, the more thoughtful teacher, when questioned, gives the following as his aims:

- (1) Development of powers of observing and gathering relevant facts;
- (2) Teaching of the scientific method of dealing with these facts;
- (3) Development of the ability to generalize correctly;
- (4) Teaching how to solve problems;



(5) Imparting useful information and laboratory skill.

We are rightly impressed by this comprehensive list of aims, but when we study carefully what is being done in the class-rooms, we discover that only the last aim is actually kept in the foreground, while the first four aims are completely ignored. And the teacher is not aware that behind this neglect of four of the five aims, there lies a distinction which has escaped his notice. And that is the distinction between the *method* of science and the *content* of science. The first four aims relate to the method of science, rather to the scientific attitude to Nature, to the scientific view of life, while the last is concerned with the knowledge-content of science and the skills it develops. So far as their effects on the mind of the learner are concerned, there is a world of difference between *method* and *content* of science and this difference is perhaps, sub-consciously recognized by certain eminent scientists who are pleading for the systematic teaching of the scientific method. In his *The Scientist in action—A Scientific Study of his Methods*, the author, William H. George, writes: '... mankind might enjoy the blessings of science with less of its curses, if not only scientific facts were used, but if also *the kind of action used by scientists* in getting those facts were directed to social uses'. The author says that 'among scientists the study of scientific method has been unpopular'. The research worker has been apt to say, 'Never mind about the methods. It is the results that matter'. This attitude of the research worker towards his own methods is to be deplored, for a critical analysis of the methodology of science is bound to reveal the excellence as well as the limitations of the results. Prof. George has, therefore, taken great pains to study the method and publish his findings in the form of an excellent monograph.

Now, to the student of philosophy, the analysis of scientific method is valuable for an entirely different reason. And let me state it immediately. The teaching and learning of

the so-called 'facts' of science or the *content* of scientific knowledge make one aggressive, egotistic, and power-crazy, while a careful critical study of the *method* of science will make one humble, non-aggressive, and non-material in outlook. This statement may take many a reader by surprise, but it is nevertheless true. If for a moment we consider the nature of scientific knowledge as it is imparted to young persons, we find that it is given to pupils along with a large dose of its practical application. In fact, it is the contention of modern teachers that the practical aspects of theoretical knowledge should be emphasized in class teaching. The subtle effect of such teaching on the minds of youthful learners is not readily seen by the teachers. Facts of science give a sense of power over Nature, and such power is, of course, to be desired. In the young ones it generates self-confidence, initiative, and drive. And under proper conditions, it canalizes the creative energy which may be struggling for expression. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that so far as the social environment is concerned, this power in the hands of the scientist tends to generate an intolerable sense of superiority. Often the young learner feels that those who have not learnt science are little better than fools. He goes about flinging his scientific knowledge at the heads of others, first at the less fortunate members of his family and then at others outside. He speaks of the 'unscientific' way of looking at things with thinly veiled contempt. And in this he is encouraged by the teachers of science. Add to this the fact that science has a pronounced introvert effect on the mind, and you see at once what a potent power science can be for perverting the mind. And since aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual values are ignored by science, we see the stage set for perverting the young and impressionable mind of students.

We have been stressing the difference between the *method* of science and the *content* of science in respect of the different attitudes to life which they generate in the mind. We have also seen how the *content* of science



inflames the aggressive and possessive impulses in the human mind. Let us now turn our attention to the *method* of science.

The *method* of science, the inductive-deductive method *par excellence*, has the most desirable effect of making the learner self-disciplined, non-aggressive, and humble. And under proper guidance it is bound to lead the learner beyond science to higher philosophical and spiritual truths. Witness what is happening in nuclear physics and nuclear biology.

What then is the *method* of science which we claim to be a corrective to the impulses of aggression and superiority created by the *content* of science? It is nothing but the experimental method which is familiar to every student of science. There are four clear-cut stages in this method. In the first place, as the result of well assorted and dynamic knowledge present in the mind of the scientist, and also as the result of his keenly developed powers of observation, the scientist notices new and hitherto unobserved phenomena in the laboratory or in the world outside, and immediately formulates a provisional explanation. The formation of a *tentative hypothesis* is the *first* stage in the scientific method. The *second* consists in the *development* of this hypothesis, that is, in the deduction of consequences from the acceptance of the tentative hypothesis as provisionally true. A hypothesis which does not yield suggestive conclusions is barren, and is of no use in science. The *third* stage is the stage of *verification* of the consequences deduced in the second. It is here that experimentation in the laboratory comes in. It is here that all the ingenuity of the scientist in making Nature give up her closely treasured secrets will be displayed. The scientist will search persistently till his verification either supports the consequences drawn from his tentative hypothesis in whole or in part, or refutes it completely. And the last stage and the *fourth* stage is one of *acceptance, modification, or rejection* of the tentative hypothesis framed at the first stage. If the second and third stages

agree completely, then the provisional hypothesis is accepted as true and is raised to the status of a law of science. Otherwise it is totally rejected; a new hypothesis is framed, and the entire process repeated over and over till a law is established. If there is only partial verification, then partial modifications are made in the provisional hypothesis and the process repeated till there is full verification.

Such is the method of science, and the beauty of it is that even after a hypothesis is raised to the status of a law, the scientist is ready and willing to give it up, if new facts come to light. The history of science is full of discarded hypotheses. They serve to remind the scientist constantly that all his laws are only working hypothesis. Nature has steadily pushed the scientist to the corner where he has been forced to admit the exceedingly humble part he plays in building up knowledge. It is here that the disciplining effect of the *method* of science comes in. The method forces the scientist to recognize the fact that scientific knowledge is *relative* and never absolute, that it is always in flux and can never reach the final goal of truth, that the picture which science gives of the world is a very partial, incomplete, and distorted picture, and that reason which is the main tool of science is a very unreliable guide in the search for truth. While the *content* of science tends to stimulate the aggressive impulses, the *method* of science, if presented properly by the teacher, particularly if the young student is made conscious of its logical and philosophical implication at every stage, will tend to make the student humble and non-aggressive.

A reflection on the *method* of science, properly guided by the teacher, will thus tend to produce a harmoniously developed personality in young learners. Moreover, at the present advanced stage of research in nuclear physics, it is impossible for any one individual scientist to carry on original research by himself in an isolated laboratory. Team-work is the order of the day. And this forcible companionship with like-minded scientists will have a very healthy effect on the younger men



who are likely to become introverted in the ordinary laboratory. I have already hinted at the introvert tendencies likely to be developed by scientists. Advocated scientific research is itself the expression of introversion. But the situation which is developing in contemporary science will automatically check the growth of extreme introversion.

The question now is, how should the teaching of science be organized in order to make this discipline an ally in our efforts to kindle the spark of divinity hidden in the minds of young persons into a blazing flame.

It is, of course, not possible to teach the methodology of science to young boys and girls, but it is possible to give such an orientation to the teaching of science in the high school that it produces desirable effects on the minds of learners. Such an orientation was suggested by me time and again and I shall repeat what I have said on the matter:

In teaching science to young and plastic minds, we must see to it that the seeds of moral degradation are not sown by the denial of God, and the exaltation of matter and force. The best way of guarding against this danger is to impress on the tender minds of boys and girls, by constant repetition, that science, by the very methods it uses, can give at her best only incomplete, partial, and unsatisfying knowledge of a very narrow part of just one aspect of man's experience. The best way of doing this is (1) to show first the cosmic purpose of the phenomena to be studied by science, pointing out how science and scientific method are temperamentally incapable of dealing with purpose, and then (2) to deal with the purely scientific aspect of the question, declaring that the method of science has only the humble role of describing events in the grand

scheme of human experience, and (3) to revert to purpose in the cosmos, and stress the need for recognizing the fact that science should seek its crown and culmination in philosophy and spirituality in order that man's personality may be kept in proper balance. In this way young pupils will be constantly reminded of the incompleteness of the knowledge provided by the method of science.

In the university, science should be made an adjunct to philosophy. The superstructure of science should be built on philosophic foundations. All students of science should be made to seek—as Jeans, Eddington, Whitehead, Haldane, and Kohler are seeking—the true function of science in its service to philosophy and spirituality.

The higher branches of science should be made accessible only to those who have a well developed moral and religious nature. Scientific knowledge, I mean research knowledge, should not be scattered broadcast before all and sundry. Like the great sages of old, the teacher of science, who must perforce be a sage himself and a Sannyasin, should first test the moral character of his pupil, and impart such knowledge as he is fit to receive according to the level of his moral development.

Finally, the highest reaches of science should be made accessible to one who has attained the stage of non-attachment to the world. Creative research in science should be undertaken only by Sannyasins of the highest order.

It is in this way that the non-aggressive and humble attitude indicated by the *method* of science may be pressed into service to counteract the impulses of aggression and dominance generated by the *content* of science in the minds of young learners.

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'What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. . . . (True education) may be described as a development of faculty, not an accumulation of words, or as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# SAINT NAMADEVA

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Centring round the deity Vitthala of Pandharpur, a long succession of saints, headed by Jnaneswara, flourished in Maharashtra for nearly four centuries beginning from the thirteenth. Of the many strikingly common features which marked their characters was the catholicity of their views as well as the simplicity of their faith. Never allowing themselves to be identified with any particular creed, they would concentrate on what they considered the essence of religion, strictly leaving alone all forms which they held in great contempt. Indifferent to all theological disputes, they concerned themselves only with the ultimate goal of God realization, to which they bent all their energy. Love of God was their chief trait which in some of them took on the form of a passion totally eclipsing all other aspects of life. Many of them were gifted poets who wrote short lyrical poems ('Abhangas') which in flights of imagination, in the beauty and grandeur of diction, or in the profundity of wisdom remain unexcelled.

One such saint of Maharashtra was Nāmadeva who claimed all the distinctions mentioned above besides a few others not attained by any other who either preceded or followed after him. Hailed by Jnaneswara as 'the light of the world', he was a contemporary of that great soul and also his peer in many respects. Together they toured many places of India, and though contrasts in temperament they found much in common between themselves so that a friendship sprang up between them which continued till the last day. Jnaneswara, whose approach to questions of religion was essentially intellectual and analytical, was nevertheless so drawn towards Namadeva (despite the latter's well-known bias towards emotionalism) that he often sought his advice and followed it, sometimes even against his own reasoning. The rela-

tions between the two were so close that their difference in outlooks was scarcely known outside the narrow circle of intimate associates, and a still more interesting fact is that after the premature passing away of Jnaneswara his admirers and disciples accepted him (Namadeva) as the natural successor of their leader.

From the evidence furnished by his own writings Namadeva's date of birth may be placed somewhere around 1270. Unlike Jnaneswara who died very young, he lived to a great age, eighty or more. Son of a tailor, Namadeva's early life gave no indication of the saint that he was to become in later years. Uncontrolled and uncontrollable, he found much delight in mischief-making which ranged from playing relatively innocent pranks on the unwary to committing violence. As he grew in years, the ferocity of the trait so increased that such crimes as murder, loot, and arson began to figure prominently among his daily doings. The climax, which proved also the turning-point in his life, occurred when one day he with his accomplices attacked and killed eighty-four horsemen. Visiting the temple of Āmvaḍhyā shortly after this, he found there a boy crying from hunger while his mother scolded him for being so unreasonable, for had she not already told him that she had no food to give him? On enquiry he learnt that the father of the boy was one of those unfortunate horsemen who had fallen victim to his cupidity. Stung by conscience he entered the temple and striking his neck with a sharp weapon made an offering of his blood to the deity as a mark of his atonement. He was turned out from the temple and from there he went direct to Pandharpur, determined that he would spend there the remaining years of his life in repentance and prayer. With the same ferocity which marked his earlier misdeeds he now



began his new life—a life of utmost poverty, a life of ceaseless prayer and bitter repentance. He continued like this for several years till at the end he had a vision of God. By now he had won recognition as a religious man and many began to visit him to receive instructions from him in matters relating to spiritual life. About this time a congregation of religious men took place at Pandharpur—it had to be Pandharpur, for, thanks to the influence of Jnaneswara, it had become the centre of attraction to all seekers of truth,—and with such eminent men as Jnaneswara, Namadeva also joined it. It so happened that among the leaders of the congregation there was one called Gorā who declared that a test should be held to decide about the fitness of those present to join a congregation meant for monks of the highest order. The idea was accepted and he undertook to carry out the test. Passing before each monk he pronounced judgment saying whether he was 'baked' or 'unbaked', that is, whether as a spiritual aspirant he had reached his goal or not. Coming to Namadeva he declared that he was entirely 'unbaked' and it would be many years before his 'baking' could be said to be complete.

Utterly dejected, Namadeva left the place and also Pandharpur resolving that he would not return till he could feel sure about his position among the monks of Pandharpur. He felt what he needed was the instruction of a competent teacher who would guide his steps to the goal. So, he began to look for such a teacher and found him in one called Visobā Khechara. When he first met Visoba, it is said that Visoba was lying and his legs were on a Shiva-linga. Shocked, Namadeva began to scold him for such sacrilegious conduct. In reply Visoba suggested that he (i.e. Namadeva) might take the trouble to put his legs elsewhere, if he so objected to his legs being where they were. Indignant Namadeva removed his legs and as he put them elsewhere, another Shiva-linga sprang up on the spot immediately. He was struck by the extraordinary power of Visoba and decided

that he was the teacher he was looking for. He besought him for his guidance which the latter agreed to confer on him, and from then onward he remained with his teacher till he had satisfied himself that he had received spiritual illumination in full measure.

Soon after this he returned to Pandharpur where the brotherhood of monks accorded him a warm welcome, Jnaneswara himself at their head. Although Jnaneswara was the first to draw the attention of the country to the deity Viṭṭhala, and the brotherhood of monks which his personality brought into being, none made both more popular than Namadeva.

Namadeva in one place describes what he experienced when he had his first vision of God. He says he saw a flood of light suddenly coming out from the skies—light as brilliant as that of a thousand suns shining at once. Voices, probably of saints, told him that God was coming. And when God came, He came in the manner as 'a cow rejoins her calf' after a long time. In another place he says, in the vein of a Vedantin, 'What lamp can we light in order to see our Self? He who gives light to the sun and the moon needs no light to be seen'.

Namadeva, as the name implies, was an apostle who preached that the Lord and the name of the Lord were one and the same. He used to say: 'The name of God is the form of God and the form of God is the name of God'; 'In the eighteen Purānas the only remedy suggested for the cure of man's evil nature is the repetition of the name of God'; 'God may conceal Himself but He cannot conceal His name'; 'Cling fast to the Lord's name, O young and old!'. Namadeva was, in his time, the greatest singer of devotional songs. With the *vīṇā* in his hand he would sing and dance with an ecstasy that was most touching. In his house, which still stands, there is the deity Keśirāja before whom his daily devotions in the form of singing and dancing used to be a great attraction to the people around. He would say that, if allowed, he would continue in this way throughout day and night, and he would not



stop even for food and drink. Such was his habit that at no time of the day would he stop repeating the name of God, no matter how he was occupied; and he would say if ever the tongue failed to keep on uttering the name of God, he would prefer that it were destroyed.

Namadeva has many Abhangas to his credit, all of them remarkable for their simplicity and clarity. And they had such a universal appeal that many of them have transcended barriers of narrow sects, having found acceptance among varying communities of people including the Sikhs. What is most characteristic of these Abhangas is Namadeva's yearning for God which is the common note which all of them strike. In utter desolation he says: 'Although you are called the Lord, strangely enough I remain helpless, a destitute, an orphan'; 'While people praise you as one who grants redemption to those fallen, I remain a fallen man all the same'; 'You are the Lord of the universe who controls everything; yet it looks as if the world has overcome you, for why else should your presence not be known?'; 'I care for nobody except you. Is it not, therefore, a shame that you should remain indifferent to me?'; 'I hate this world, yet you have made me cling to it. Is this not an act of betrayal?'; 'With tears in his eyes and hands stretched out to you, Namadeva cries out to you, O Lord!'

Many stories are related bearing on the saintly character of Namadeva. Typical of them is one in which it is said that once a dog snatched away from him a piece of bread he was eating. With a pot of curd he ran after it, begging that it might kindly accept the curd also. Namadeva was lucky in being of a generation in which many saints flourished. Most of them were simple men and women, unlettered and of lowly birth. Those who deserve special mention among them are: Sāmvatā, the gardener; Narahari, the goldsmith; Chokhā, the untouchable; Kanhopātrā, the dancing girl; Janā, the maidservant. The last named was Namadeva's maidservant, who was with him

till his last day. Like her master and teacher, she also sang and danced ecstatically before the Lord, and among women saints she was only second to Muktabai, sister of Jñaneswara. Kanhopatra, whose famed beauty brought her many suitors, declared that she would marry only him whose beauty equalled hers. And as according to her the only person who fulfilled that condition was Viṭṭhala, she would regard herself as his betrothed. Soon after this, the chief of a neighbouring State sent word asking for her hand. As it was impossible to refuse him, she stood before Viṭṭhala and put an end to her life. There is an unidentified tree marking the spot where she was buried and the tree stands to this day and is worshipped.

Describing the characteristics of a saint, Namadeva says that he is a spiritual washerman. He applies the soap of illumination, beats his linens on the rock of tranquillity and washes it in the river of knowledge. It is thus that he removes the spots of sins. His further signs are that he sees God in every being and to him gold is as if a clod of earth. His heart is free from anger and passion, and peace and forgiveness rule there. To him honour and dishonour are of the same value as they are to a tree. He recognizes no one as his enemy and his tongue is ever busy praising the Lord.

As to what we should ask of God, Namadeva says that all we need to ask of Him is that we may always think of Him alone in our hearts, utter His name alone with our lips, see nothing but Him alone with our eyes, use our hands in His service and worship only, hear only of His kindness, and that He should always be with us in this life and hereafter. Of such all-absorbing love for God there could not have been a better example than Namadeva himself, with whom it was like a fire which consumed him day and night. Till the day he passed away in 1350, his life was one long prayer, in which all his thoughts, feelings, and actions found themselves working in unison.



# THE GREAT ILLUSION

BY MANU SUBEDAR

The most outstanding feature of human nature is the gap between profession and practice, promise and performance, slogans and achievements, and generally between declared faith and objective and the actual action.

This is true of individuals; but it is pardonable in so far as man proposes and God disposes. Events occur outside and through circumstances beyond one's power. Many a good intention is frustrated. High aspiration is a very good thing and hitching the wagon to a star brings about some progress, if not the full result.

It is less pardonable when a whole group of people or people of one locality or of one religion raise a cry and pursue it, while all their actions give a lie to the fundamental basis and principles of that cry. Those who speak warmly of maintaining Christian principles and decent life would be found often in some respects terribly removed from the tenets of the Sermon on the Mount. Similarly, among many of those who wish to preserve Islam, the life and actions of some are in many directions far wide of the principles laid down by the Prophet in the *Koran*. Certain sections in India, who earn distinction or notoriety for wanting to preserve and advance Hindu faith would be found indulging in practices and tolerating cruelties which are in direct contravention of the principles and the high teachings of the Rishis.

This failing is also noticeable in political parties, who advocate all sorts of reforms in pursuance of certain principles but are unable, very often, to secure normal efficiency and clean administration. Going out for improving the world in one jump has certainly brought about confusion and general deterioration which are lamentable.

In the teachings of the Rishis, the method

adopted, in order to overcome any moral defect in an individual, is to cultivate the reverse virtue with assiduity. After some effort, there is a distinct achievement and the balance is cast so that where there was cruelty a tinge of kindness appears, where there was close-fistedness a shade of generosity comes up, and where there was revenge on many occasions the hands of a man are stayed from extreme and rash actions. The psychological principle beyond all this is merely to break the chain of tendencies inside one so that there is room for a conscious moral build-up.

The virtues to cultivate in order to get over divergence between profession and practice appear to be patience and cool reflection. It is necessary to see not only what is desirable but what is practicable. It is important that available resources be weighed up so as to emerge with a plan which could have a reasonable chance of success. Above all, what is needed is patience. The passage of time not only induces reflections but corrects singularities arising from first impulses. A follower of Vedanta who indulges in worldly joys on the plea that the world is 'unreal' (*mithyā*) becomes necessarily an object of contempt. A close examination would show that to some extent all individuals suffer from the same fault, though in a milder degree. The fault in this case is of an unduly rapid assumption not only of the truth of high principles but of its observation and adoption by the individual concerned. It is for this reason that stories of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas* often illustrate how Yudhishtira was drawn into telling what amounted to untruth, how Drona and Vishvamitra had succumbed to anger, and others, who were undeniably great, had fallen from virtue at some time or in some manner.



For the seeker after truth, every one of the saints who have come on the scene has advised humility and constant self-examination in order that he may not bite off more than he can chew and he can build himself up little by little.

There is a time gap between the moment when a man thinks he is good and when he really becomes good. There are many who think themselves great, but there are others whom the world accepts as such. Greatness is thus relative. But virtue and truth are absolute.

Contact with a saint by reading his works and the more valuable contact by personal association with him often alters a man and draws him out of his normal indifference

for a time. He is prone to think that he has already imbibed the teaching, but his physical nature, his mental habits, and some inscrutable factor, which may be called *svabhāva*, drag him back into his normal level. It is the persistent and conscious effort to rise up again and again which is required. Nothing is more fatal in this effort than the illusion (unfortunately too widely seen in individuals and groups) that they have already achieved, whereas all that is registered is that they are attempting to do something better.

All the saints and great teachers of mankind have repeatedly emphasized the warning in this direction, but it is not generally availed of. After a great teacher has passed away, the world relaxes into its own old ugliness and wickedness.

## ORTHOBIOSIS

BY SWAMI VIMALANANDA

'The wise and thoughtful man attacks his faults  
One after other, momentarily,  
In order due, and rubs them all away,  
E'en as a smith blows off the silver's dross.  
Just as the iron rust accumulates  
Self-born, and eats itself away  
So with the man who sinneth: day by day  
His own deeds to destruction lead him on'.

—*Dhammapada*

Our actions, assertions, and beliefs are deeply influenced by passions and prejudices. The faculty of drawing correct inferences is not a universal gift. In the vast majority of men and women the power of understanding is so rudimentary that they are not able to trace precisely the implications of a combination of facts or suppositions. There are many even among those enjoying a reputation for learning and public career, who support their conclusions and validate their actions on presumptions based on collective or individual passion. Those who are capable of ordering life according to the prescript of right reason are not many. The number of those who attain to

such singular purity of mind in which reason shines forth undimmed by the clouds of passion are few and far between. These earnest, mindful, virtuous souls, ever wedded to a steadfast aim, alone can be counted among the real benefactors of humanity, for, they proclaim by silent practice the principles of correct living, which is the sole basis of our well-being. The art and science of correct living according to spiritual, moral, and physical principles, tested by long experience and sound reason, is termed 'orthobiosis' in axiological terminology.

'I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be  
A pleasant road,  
I do not ask that thou wouldst take from me  
Aught of its load.  
For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead:  
Lead me aright,  
Though strength should falter and though heart  
should bleed,  
Through peace to light'.

Religious poetry has time and again regaled



us with such beautiful outpourings, invoking the helping hand of God to lead us aright through the weary and burdensome course of life; and these tender sentiments have produced an exact echo in thousands of hearts. But often our hearts, awakened by the passing pangs of feeling, are again wont to fold themselves and droop without a strong intellectual impulse acting upon it constantly. Virtue, kindness, goodness, righteousness, and such other moral dispositions, in and through which a spiritual religion expresses itself, are acquired only by introspective alertness and constant repetition of suitable activities. In an unreflective creature habitual morality and good conduct cannot exist. Nothing is more spiritual than that which is moral. Intellectual understanding of principles and an irrevocable committal to their power are essential to moral virtue.

Excepting the far advanced in moral and spiritual life, every one of us at the bottom determines what is right and honourable by our own interests and enjoyments. Not a day passes without bringing to our notice instances to prove that we are not restrained by considerations of right from pursuing by hook or by crook what is to our selfish advantage. This is true also in the case of a class, a community, a party, or a nation because there too mass egotism and collective passion play their part in the same manner as in the individual; perhaps in a larger measure because of the powerful weapons of organization, discipline, and propaganda they have at their command. No wonder, a sensitive soul like Swami Vivekananda declared: 'Ours is the gospel of the oneness of all beings and all national feelings are but wicked superstitions'. Religions of the world, he said, have become lifeless mockeries; what we want is character. Reform of our society is impossible without reforming ourselves. In the words of Fichte, the individual is the base and apex of the universe. Our inner being has an incommensurably greater value than all our belongings. Each individual is to be judged ultimately by what he or she is and not by what he or she

possesses. Only a mind-training system, originating in voluntary discipleship and governing the life of the whole society, can save us from moral disaster. The ancient orders of society and stations of life did this for those who came within their fold. We neglect this aspect of self-culture to our peril. Unless we set our mental house in order and reconstruct ourselves on a spiritual basis, our laborious civilization and boasted culture will lose their enduring worth.

All the changes that are brought about by the unprecedented advance of science and technology, or the universal assertion of the rights of man, have not transformed the fundamental nature of individual human beings. Greed and envy, malice and fraud, lust and cruelty, hatred and discontent, luxury and aggrandizement, cynical selfishness and mutual antagonisms, ignorance and stupidity, are not mitigated in any measure. If bigotry, intolerance, and fanaticism have decreased in the religious field, they are predominant in politics, industry, and trade. Unscrupulous extortioners and cheats are not a speciality of any particular age. Even in 1952 human ways generally remain silly and often insane and criminal. Perhaps this difference may be striking: An increasing number of us are today inescapably impressed with a standard pattern of thought and behaviour by the universal prevalence of screen, radio, and the press, and we have become robbed of personality, character, and independent thought, being reduced to a helpless sport of our material circumstances. Even in the nooks and corners of the world, where the amenities of the industrial civilization are not available in an adequate measure, its baneful results are in evidence. Keen appetite for novelties and distractions have invaded even the hinterlands, without an enhancement of healthier tastes or saving ideals. Social, economic, and cultural parasitism has gained some respectability as a variety of cosmopolitanism. The golden rule, pithily expressed by Kālidāsa in the verse '*sva vīrya guptā hi manoh prasūtiḥ*' (children of Manu—humanity—have, indeed, no other



security save that of their own energy), ought to have a wider appreciation today than ever before. *Vīrya* and *citta*—energy and thought—are the very key-note of ancient Upanishads and Buddhist Suttas. If we suffer as a result of our own laziness to train ourselves for the use of the gifts of science, we cannot lay the blame on new discoveries and inventions. With a prolixity of mechanism and poverty of purpose civilized man is fast losing his purpose, value, and goal.

The strength and safety of humanity consists in the virtue and intelligence developed in the largest measure and largest number. Moral reflections in themselves would not make us moral. A spiritual ideal alone can give the backbone to the moral aspirations of man. When pleasure is made the ruling power, health and life are in peril. Every system speaking about the rudiments of self-treatment counsels methods of physical health—correct habits of eating, drinking, breathing, and thinking. We are asked to practise order, memory, concentration, and self-control for achievement of progress and success in life. Let us not forget that man is not to remain a glorified animal, practising precision and method merely in dietetics and external social behaviour. Poverty, sloth, carelessness, and love of ease do not exhaust the list of our impediments. The chief obstacle is that the moral clues to social life today are not derived from a deep faith in values realized by spiritual discipline. Unity of purpose and character is impossible without the spiritual ideal. Modern physics and psychology have taken away from us the supernatural basis of morality and therefore we suffer a grievous fragmentation of character. The will and capacity to implement moral rules and regulations cannot be adequately effective and sustained if they lack a sanction higher than social utility. It is the tone and colour of the feeling and attitude of the particular generation that determine the inner worth of reforms rather than the laws, legislations, and blue-prints put through by any government. Reconstruction of a society or a nation is impossible without reconstruct-

ing the individuals. For the estimation of learning we may accumulate knowledge paying no attention to living well; we may cavil at and dispute about any plan or programme adapted by any of the political, economic, and reforming parties; the best of our energies are spent out in this manner and eventually we bemoan our lot. Until good and godly men and women are produced in numbers there is no remedy for our maladies. This is a standing demand on humanity.

Arid, problematic reasonings or mental theories cannot help orthobiosis. A genuine spirituality—the true energizing influence of religion *without its dross*—alone can impel men and women to desire good and seek after the good. One who has received the least spiritual awakening need not be argued into the belief that it is infinitely noble to do right and infinitely base to do wrong. We have, no doubt, to seek the light of religion not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the glories of the *real* man and highest spiritual truths. While morality is a structure built upon the pillars of praise and blame, spirituality is the recognition of our inborn divine nature and the manifestation of it in thought and activity. There cannot be a more sound foundation for the gospel of social raising up, gospel of equality, and gospel of individual perfection than the solidarity and inherent perfection of man. In the words of Macarius, the throne of the Deity is our mind. Self-denial, endurance, and other moral qualities often turn out to be a form of exquisite hedonism without genuine spiritual life. Since our normal consciousness is often at the mercy of invasions from the unconscious region, by sleeping passions and impulses which we are not able to track to their lair, we have no safety until we discover our inherent divinity through the concentration of our thoughts, will, and love upon the spiritual Reality at the root of the apparent man. When the love of truth rules in the heart the light of truth will certainly guide our practices. Thus reason, which is acclaimed as 'the candle of the Lord within', is not opposed to the



spiritual; on the other hand what is spiritual is the most rational.

Here we come to the inestimable help we receive from the outstanding personalities of spirituality, the divine centres or characters that have led successive generations to the goal and around whom valuable elements of religion have gathered. They have all strongly exhorted us to strain and strive in every way for spiritual ends, keeping before us a perfect goal which can never become obsolete. To be saved from spiritual darkness, moral blindness, and self-destruction we have to trust in these unsurpassed natural rulers of humanity, who were unspotted by the world and yet were ever compassionately solicitous to train, discipline, and raise the rest of mankind to their own level. Having withdrawn their hearts from the love of visible things those who followed these great ones, strove in solitude to regain the balance and tranquillity disturbed by the world's market; and after having gained incomparable wisdom, they returned to society to apply the healing balm to all who were ill with the various diseases of the world. They lived the perfect life of righteousness in all purity and were free from wants, cravings, and prejudices. These are the really competent guides to show us the way of right living. Though the way shown by them might appear rugged and impossible to the foolish, unseeing, unknowing, passion-stung worldlings, a time will come in the course of inner evolution when even they will recognize that the former alone are really trustworthy. Every concession gained by the unregenerate man in furtherance of his self-interest and enjoyment only adds to his corruption or hastens his ruin. We have no right, as Bacon said, to what is not for our benefit. These great physicians of mankind have prescribed for us the principles of right living by their own example. They have given tone and strength to the very nature of man. A character formed in their mould can lead us to perfection and give us peace in this tumultuous world.

The great incarnations of wisdom and com-

passion never failed to bring home to mankind the supreme need of vigorous striving, clear intelligence, and practical reason. Like a party leader, raised to the crest of success by omnipotent propaganda, they were never consumed by the ambition to lead. Since suffering in some form or other is the lot of every creature, these great beacon-lights of morality and religion, extremely sensitive to the distress of others, were bent on striving for the good of all living beings with an all-embracing heart and vision. While the leaders of factions and sects are thrown into perpetual oblivion as soon as their discontented company of listeners turn their back upon them, the sons of Light have found a place in the hearts of all who seek freedom from the defilements and woes of existence. In his heavenly melody, Sri Krishna assured all aspirants, 'He who takes refuge within me, shall pass beyond Maya, suffering, and delusion'. Jesus Christ graciously called out: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. Buddha declared, 'O Anurādhā, it is just Ill and the ceasing of Ill I proclaim' and gave Ānanda this memorable parting counsel: 'Strive for your welfare, apply yourself to your own welfare, dwell heedful, ardent, and resolute'. Those who have a rational habit of mind and have the capacity to appreciate facts laid before them do not fail to see that the body of pure teaching, unfogged by later accretions and originating from these great teachers, is remarkably scientific, rational, and humane, and all the same rooted in transcendent realization. The great Buddha, by dint of rational thinking and spiritual insight gained through sharp discipline, revised and renewed an existing system of morality and spiritual values and proclaimed to the world the Four Aryan Truths consisting of the truth, emergence, ceasing, and the way leading to the ceasing of Ill or Suffering, and opened up the Aryan Eightfold Path of right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation by which he himself had attained to calm,



insight, enlightenment, and Nirvāna. No doubt, the welfare of the individual was the only sanction he invoked and he employed the inductive method to deduce general principles from observed facts. But to say that his Path has no other emphasis except that of the law of duty and morality will be to ignore the importance of the central concept of Nirvana. In a variety of ways the 'Welfarer' has vividly illustrated the importance of *śīla* or good conduct which is fundamental to right view and right living. The one point he has repeatedly stressed is that we should never fail to apply to ourselves the power of constructive criticism, and for this he has invoked *prajñā* and *vīrya* to the utmost capacity.

The gospel of right living, propagated by these great ancient teachers and their worthy disciples, have not become otiose even today and cannot be so for ages to come, so long as man's nature and environments remain what they are. The system of discipline which they propounded rests on detachment from worldly allurements and practice of self-discipline—*vairāgya* and *abhyāsa*. He who wishes to be near his ideal will have to abandon all that will alienate him from that ideal. The very first step is, therefore, detachment from natural antipathies and dislikes, from vanity of possessions and slavery of rank, and from tyranny of circumstances. Life really begins only with renunciation. In Carlyle's telling words, 'the fraction of life can be increased not so much by increasing your numerator as by lessening your denominator'. Only those who make the claim of wages zero can overcome the world. There is a sad limit to the extent to which a man can progress morally under the impulse of a worldly motive. Kant has rightly pointed out that moral virtue is strength of will in doing one's duty and resisting temptation. To strengthen one's will,

one of the most effective methods is practice of renunciation. Only in a fully developed character we notice the best expression of will power. Psychologists advise the formation of an ideal of character as the primary condition for a strong will. Critical self-knowledge and self-judgment are of great service in this regard. What we admire that we become. 'Plato located the soul of man in the head; Christ located it in the heart', said St. Jerome. Almost all religions have done it and described all virtues as but the right ordering of love. Next to renunciation comes the supreme need of *abhyāsa*. Without care and diligence, without a downright condemnation of sloth, negligence, and misplaced levity, none makes any moral or spiritual progress. If one fails to translate into action what he thinks to be right, he remains a fossil. Buddha cited as an exemplary idler the person who said that he could not apply himself to work because it was too cold at one time and too hot at another, too early one day and too late on another, and because he was too hungry on one day and too full on another. He who proposes to himself a new life will never tolerate such a sluggish attitude. One who is impressed with the vanity and the transitoriness of the world, its undefined horrors, its senseless happiness, its catastrophies and accidents, its cruelty, perversity, and selfishness, its robberies, blasphemies, and treacheries, cannot live a lukewarm life; and naturally self-amendment will be his chief concern. He will seek happiness not in the abundance of temporal goods or the intoxicating shapes, sounds, scents, and savours they lay before him, but in the bright, happy, and joyous life of purity and righteousness. His inarticulate aspiration will be:

'Forgive and make my nature whole,  
My inbred malady remove;  
To perfect health restore my soul,  
To perfect holiness and love'.



# THE SPIRITUAL QUEST

BY ANIRVAN

The world of Spirit is as much real as the world of the senses; and mysteries abound in both. The adventures of the human mind in both these realms are equally justifiable, because their ultimate aim is the creation of some abiding values which will widen and enrich the consciousness—the last irreducible factor in the scale of being. What is occult, must be laid bare; and its forces must be mastered and made to yield to the growth of the being as a whole. Here Science and Religion meet as on a common ground: a leap into the beyond, whether it be with the aid of an imaginative flight of hypothesis or with the aid of a living faith sustained by an inchoate perception of some emerging truth, is the motive force in both. And both aim at converting knowledge into a currency of practical utility which will lead to a harmonious growth of the collective life.

But, in the recent past, there has been a tendency to create a cleavage between the science of Matter and the science of Spirit. Sophistication takes one as the quest of some objectively real truth, while it looks upon the other as running after something subjective and ideal, if not in the last analysis an illusion. The modern mind prides itself on its scientific attitude which seeks to build the structure of truth on the sensible and the obvious (*dr̥ṣṭa*, *laukika*) belonging to a public world. But surely this cannot take us far, because the field of experience is not confined to sensible facts alone. As the human mind can soar into the world of universals, so it can also pass judgments of values—aesthetic and ethical. These visions and judgments, though rising from a private and subjective source in the individual, tend to grow into a public order of things as the Law of Sympathy finds a wider and wider scope: at last it leads to the concept of a unitive human life—the Purusha of the Vedic vision.

From a free play of this urge of unitive growth and expansion in the human consciousness rise the spiritual values which are nearer to life, and thus, in a sense more primary and comprehensive than other creations of inner values. The obvious then deepens into the occult (*adr̥ṣṭa*, *alaukika*), and perception utilizes not a discursive reason but an integrative intuition to decipher its meaning. The movement is inwards, and yet not divorced from peripheral contacts. In fact, the Vedic seers frankly equated the spiritual urge with a sublimated life-urge, setting for its goal a complete mastery over the forces of decay (*jarā*) and death (*mṛtyu*). This motive has persisted throughout the ages in various forms. Sometimes it has appeared highly rationalized and almost overshooting itself as we see in the Buddhist venture and the like; but it has also been more attuned to the demands of Nature as can be seen in the appendage of occult practices in the Yogic and the Tantric cults. Naturally, ethicism has come to the forefront in the one and aestheticism in the other, though the healthy instinct of the collective consciousness has always attempted at a harmonious blending of the two and so keeping the ideal of the spiritual achievement nearer to its Vedic original.

If the root-impulses are taken into consideration, Science and Religion do not seem to vary much in their objectives. If the aim of Science is to create such all-round life values as will ensure the fullest self-expression of the individual in a social group, this has no less been the aim of Religion too. The methods of attaining this aim will be fundamentally related to the same spirit of enquiry, powers of reasoning, and utilitarian motive common to the human mind, but they will be worked out in apparently different fields



with different assumptions. If Science lays stress on the tangible objective data, the spiritual quest is more concerned with an array of subjective phenomena which seem to elude the senses. In both, the mind is confronted with some indubitable *facts* of experience behind which it perceives the existence of some occult *forces* whose working it tries to seize and manipulate.

Whether these forces are to be regarded as material (*bhūtaśakti*) or spiritual (*devaśakti*) is an issue which may mean much to a modern mind, because its intellectual predilections have created a rift between Spirit and Matter. But it was not so with the ancient Vedic seers. A pristine purity of consciousness allowed them to see Reality as a whole; and in the scale of Matter, Force, and Spirit they could discern only a process of gradual illumination occurring in some ineffable neutral Being of universal extension and infinite potentiality. It is this integral vision on which rests the whole scheme of Vedic gods (*devāh*) and worlds (*urvīh, lokāh*) wherein Matter was as easily spiritualized as Spirit was materialized.

This can be seen in the use of the word *ātman*, which occurs so freely in the Vedic literature. Indologists have variously interpreted it as body, breath, or Spirit and have seen in it a gradual evolution of religious thought from a crass materialistic bias to some probable heights of spiritual abstraction. But this is a logical analysis of a total psychic experience in which the polarity of subjectivity and objectivity is not yet apparent. The experience is characterized more by feeling than by thought: it is the intimate *feeling* of Selfhood that is freely projected into different planes of existence which are never regarded as mutually exclusive and having no interrelation or interaction between them. Indeed the *ātman* is an integral whole of body-life-spirit—a triune entity whose constituents can be separated only in thought but not in feeling. Feeling there records the operation of what may be called a law of density and rarefaction which determines whether one is

moving up or down the scale of mutual transformation of Spirit and Matter. In no period of this process the triunity can be broken into three wholly disparate elements for the simple reason that, while thought is analytic, feeling is unitive; and in spiritual experience it is ultimately the feeling (*anubhava*, lit. 'a becoming in accordance with something') that counts more than the thought.

To recognize the supremacy of feeling in this respect may appear unpalatable to intellectualism which looks upon the former as something crude, hazy, and erratic. But it cannot be denied that it is only the feeling at its sublime height which can infuse the sense of a living realism into the abstractions of a schematizing intellect; it alone can make Reality whole again by bridging the gap which the logical mind has created between subject and object, between Spirit and Matter. Feeling is simple and primary, while thought is elaborate and evolved. But the things of the Spirit also are simple and retain their freshness and creative energy while they still rise unalloyed from the depths of the being. Their elaboration by the architectonic methods of the thinking mind is not a gain in terms of evolution. Indeed the current evolutionary canon may prove here to be a signal failure: when a man evolves intellectually, it does not mean that he is on the road to higher spiritual evolution as well. The great mistake of modern scholarship is to apply its intellectual standards in judging things which spring from sources other than the intellect.

And so, to assign a higher place to revelation as a source of true knowledge than to externalized sense-perception and reasoning, as is done by spiritual philosophy everywhere, is not to cherish a dogma. It is an extension of the field of perception by bringing about a radical change in its mode. This change is affected by seizing upon the natural power of universalization in the human mind and intensifying it by the Yogic method to such an extent as to make its abstractions appear in concrete forms. It, however, does not mean a hallucinatory return to the senses, but a dis-



covery of another world of Reality where the instrumentation of sense-perception (*jñāna*) is changed into that of idea-perception (*viññāna*). It is an experience with the whole being—a total and living experience with a stamp of universality which makes it analogous to the feeling-experience of the normal mind. But we must bear in mind that the feeling-tone of *viññāna* is not of the nature of a murky emotional disturbance, but of a serene illumination and of an ineffable joy whose creations depict Reality in meaningful forms of massed ideation.

It is a mistake to suppose that these things can be understood and rationally interpreted by an application of the laws of biological evolution. In evolution of forms, we can have a series starting from the simple and the homogeneous, and proceeding through a laborious and complicated process, we come to the complex and the heterogeneous. The last gives us some discrete sensate values. These can be clearly grasped by the mind and again pieced together to form a hazy notion of some universal concept or Idea. But we may suppose (and this will need nothing more than a change of perspective only) that this Idea, which is reconstructed by the reasoning of the sense-mind, was the original driving force behind the evolution of forms. We may go further and claim that a direct perception of this Idea through a supersensuous intuition translating itself into ideative sensations is not an impossibility. And then we have another way of looking at Existence—the anticipatory way. It will be a moving, not from the known to the unknown, from creation to its source, from a sensible Nature to an imagined God, but seeing God face to face as the inmost meaning of the Self, and deducing Nature from Him.

This vision is a total experience whose extent or intensity is beyond the computation of any graded scale. The school of thought which looks upon religion as wholly a social product and, in deference to objective methods, attempts to link its development with the progress of social evolution, can only give a

superficial account of the collective and the average. But it cannot explain the appearance of outstanding individuals, nor can it plumb the depth of their experiences. Spiritual giants have appeared in every age and every land, even in circumstances most unfavourable to spiritual growth. And this points not to the strictly measurable culmination of some laborious ascent of evolutionary Nature from below, but the descent of the Spirit from above in a cataract.

The phenomenon can be best explained on the Sāṅkhya conception of Purusha and Prakriti—Purusha the timeless, the immobile, the Seer and yet an ingathered totality, and Prakriti its dynamism of Will in time. The life-urge rushes on, driven by some hidden force which pushes it from below or pulls it from above; but after reaching a point it subsides into quiescence which to awareness means a fusion of the Plenum and the Void. In itself, this quiescence is simple, colourless, and indeterminate; it is the final abstraction of pure consciousness. It is the dead end of all spiritual endeavours, of all adventures into the Beyond. Its value cannot be measured: it is at once the zero and the infinity. Values ascribed to it (as is generally done in academic philosophies trying to create a hierarchy in the Void) are simply projections of the values which have been created on this side of the line by measuring the intensity of the Prakritic drive and mapping the extent of the phenomenal existence it has covered or conquered. The sole positive value that can be given to this quiescence of simple consciousness (and, even then, this value can be made explicit only with a backward reference to the strain to which Prakriti has put herself to reach the point of self-annihilation) is a feeling of relaxation and expansion, a sense of a serene poise in the Void. And it may mean a Plenum which, like the consummation of Death, may burst in all its glory at any point of the Prakritic evolution.

The Vedic seers expressed this by the imagery of *div*, the luminous expanse, and of *vyoman*, the security of the Vast; their psycho-



logical counterparts were given by such terms as *Brahman* and *br̥hat* meaning the ever-growing vastness of consciousness. The imagery of *ākāśa*, which has been such a fruitful source of inspiration in mythology, is an exact symbol of the deepest spiritual experiences. And the ideas derived from it have dominated all subsequent speculations in philosophy about the ultimate nature of Reality. The soteriological outlook of the Indian mind, whether in the orthodox or the protestant schools of thought, has its source in this Vedic conception of the luminous Void. If we come to consider the problem of the origin of the religious instinct, this concept can be shown to underlie all shades of spiritual endeavours and achievements in man. Their aim is everywhere to reach an ecstatic condition to which he is driven by an inherent urge of going beyond himself—an urge which for him is a biological and a psychological necessity.

Paradoxically speaking, ecstasy may be called a simulation of sleep in order to see more clearly, a simulation of death in order to live more intensely. It is the secret method of conscious Nature for pushing ahead in her evolutionary endeavour which must henceforth be carried on along spiritual lines in the broadest sense of the term. The central fact of this ecstatic condition is a clear sense of the Void, whose ultimate value, as we have seen, lies in the irreducibility of simple and absolute consciousness. As such, it is beyond the scheme of Prakritic evolution. It is the neutral light which illumines all the workings of Prakriti and the illumination can rise into awareness at any stage. If *Self*-consciousness is the decisive factor which differentiates man from animals and is the definite mark of a saltus in Nature's evolutionary process, then

all the deeper instincts which are distinctly human must have their roots in the Idea of the Self; but there, by Idea we do not mean any logical abstraction made by the analytic function of later thought, but an empirical seed-content embodying a direct feeling-awareness. The seed has life and it sprouts into Power.

Religious instinct, then, is not so much the product of an impact of the objective world upon an inchoate psychic structure as the dynamic expression of the Idea of the Self as it lives and grows. The Vedic seers symbolized this as the spark of Fire 'lying in so many ways at the root of life' (*śayuh katidhā cid āyave*), and spoke of the flowering of the spiritual consciousness as the 'awakening' of the Fire. The Self awakes and expands: the Fire is born and it consumes and assimilates its source, and spreads, burning whatever comes in its way until all is Fire.

There could be no better portrayal of the origin, growth, and end of the religious aspiration than the Vedic imagery. In reality, the spiritual quest is a phenomenon of Universal Life whose origin is bound to appear to the individual as shrouded in a mystery. But its kinship is none the less felt to be palpably real beyond the bounds of Time, in the sheen of the quickened moment which reflects eternity. It is not only an Awareness, but also a Power. In its creative vision, the barriers between Matter and Spirit break down and the Will in the individual becomes the magic wand of the Divine Magi awakening the slumbering dreams in the cosmic depths. And then, the quest of the Spirit discovers a perfect equipoise of *kaivalya* and *siddhi* in the nudity of the living Void.



# THE CONTROL OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

In order to attain the highest illumination we all have to pass through a *second birth* or the spiritual birth. It is our awakening to the consciousness that we are spiritual beings in our essential nature; that we, as spiritual beings, are all parts or modes or reflections of the Infinite Spirit. Hindu teachers call that the Sat-Chit-Ananda (Absolute Existence, Consciousness, Bliss). Others call it God, Supreme Spirit, Allah, Tao, the Oversoul, and so on. Our spiritual birth is the beginning of a new life.

As a result of steady spiritual practice, or even before we take to spiritual life, all of a sudden we may be raised to a higher spiritual plane of consciousness. This first spiritual awakening shows us to what height we may rise, but not to what depth we may fall any time later. Our desires and passions are lying hidden deep in the sub-conscious mind. Unless they are controlled and transmuted, they may lead the soul to a premature spiritual death. Of course, the Spirit can never die; but, after a fall, the soul will have to begin its spiritual life over again, either in this life or in a future life. Such sheer waste of time should be avoided.

## INSTINCT IS THE MEMORY OF OUR PAST EXPERIENCES

Patanjali, the ancient teacher of Yoga, declares: 'Man is Spirit. He calls it Purusha. Purusha means a spiritual being, a spiritual entity. Owing to ignorance, the Spirit identifies itself with the ego. Egotism, again, makes the soul subject to attachment and aversions; then comes the great clinging to life, with fear of death, and the longing for self-preservation together with all troubles consequent on it'. He says in an aphorism, 'Clinging to life is found in the learned as well as in the ignorant'. Commenting on this,

Swami Vivekananda makes the following very significant remarks:

'This clinging to life you see manifested in every animal. . . . In India this clinging to life has been one of the arguments to prove past experience and existence. For instance, if it be true that all our knowledge has come from experience, then it is sure that that which we never experienced we cannot imagine, or understand. . . . What is this instinct? . . . In the language of the Yogi, instinct is involved reason. Discrimination becomes involved, and gets to be automatic Samskāras. Therefore it is perfectly logical to think that all we call instinct in this world is simply involved reason. As reason cannot come without experience, all instinct is, therefore, the result of past experience. . . . The recurring experiences of various fears, in course of time, produce this clinging to life. . . . Why is this clinging to life? We have seen that it has become instinctive. In the psychological language of the Yogis it has become a Samskara. The Samskaras, fine and hidden, are sleeping in the Chitta. All these past experiences of death, all that which we call instinct, is experience become sub-conscious. It lives in the Chitta, and is not inactive, but is working underneath. The Chitta-Vrittis, the mind-waves, which are gross, we can appreciate and feel; they can be more easily controlled, but what about the finer instincts? How can they be controlled? . . . These feelings have to be controlled in the germ, the root, in their fine forms, before even we have become conscious that they are acting on us. With the vast majority of mankind the fine states of these passions are not even known—the states in which they emerge from sub-consciousness. When a bubble is rising from the bottom of the lake we do not see it, nor even when it is nearly come to the surface; it is only when it bursts and makes



a ripple that we know it is there. We shall only be successful in grappling with the waves when we can get hold of them in their fine causes, and until you can get hold of them, and subdue them before they become gross, there is no hope of conquering any passion perfectly. To control our passions we have to control them at their very roots; then alone shall we be able to burn out their very seeds'.

In the above, Swami Vivekananda is giving us a glimpse into the Hindu system of psychology which we moderns can also apply with great profit.

#### PAST IMPRESSIONS OR TENDENCIES CAN BE CONTROLLED

Freud, the founder of the modern psycho-analytic school, has done us a great service by his discovery of the importance of the sub-conscious and its dynamic influence on consciousness in relation to neurosis and mental troubles. It is strange that he refused to believe (when he was told) that the ancient Hindu thinkers knew well of the workings of the sub-conscious mind. As a matter of fact, the ancient Hindus knew much more than the modern Western psychologists.

During very ancient times, the Seers of the Upanishads, the most ancient of the Hindu scriptures, declared from their experiences, 'This body is the abode of the Self, the eyes are the instrument of seeing, the nose is the instrument of smelling, the ear is the instrument of hearing. He who knows, he who thinks is the Self; the mind is his divine eye, the instrument of knowledge'.

At the very beginning of his *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patanjali tells us that the Spirit is identified with the waves of the mind. Mind is likened to a lake and this lake is breaking into waves. Our thoughts and feelings are the waves. But how do these waves rise?

There is the outside object. Some stimulus comes from the outside object to the senses. Take, for instance, the eye. The stimulus is carried farther to the optic centre which is the seat of the sense of vision. From there it goes to the mind. The mind takes

it to the Lord of the mind. There comes a reaction and this reaction is the thought or feeling. It is a wave. We are always identifying ourselves with such waves, in the form of thought, feeling, and willing.

According to the teachers of Hindu psychology, thinking, feeling, and willing are all like waves of the mental lake. There are no watertight compartments between thought, feeling, and willing. They all go together. Each wave, as a matter of fact, contains more or less something of all the three—thought, feeling, and willing. The name is given according to the dominating element. When a wave touches the head more than the heart we call it a thought. When it touches the heart more than the head we call it a feeling. And when the wave probably touches both the head and the heart, without any special preference to either of them, we call it will, which expresses itself in action. But all these are waves, and the soul is all the time identifying itself with them.

However, there are waves and waves. Some waves come from the upper layers of the mind, others from the depths of the mind. These latter waves are the most troublesome. At the very start, Patanjali tells us how the Spirit remains always identified with the non-Spirit,—maybe with fancies, building castles in the air, building a fool's paradise. He also says how, again, this Spirit remains identified with false notions, taking the unreal to be real, remains identified with egotism, attachment, and aversion, with ignorance in sleep, and also clinging to life. It is lost in unconsciousness, and again it remains identified with memory. How often we dwell on our memory! We live in the past and are not anxious to live an active, intelligent life just now. Even when we try to understand things clearly, avoiding misconceptions, we remain identified with our own thoughts and feelings—maybe correct thoughts and good feelings—but identified we are. We do not know what we are in our essential nature.

In all states of our consciousness, we are identified in some form or other with these



waves. We are identified with what we are not on the conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious planes, nay even in deep sleep. As already mentioned, some waves come from the surface layers of the mind and others come from the deeper layers of the mind, but all these stand in the way of Self-realization.

#### ANCIENT SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS AND MODERN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

Swami Vivekananda observes, 'Modern scientific men hold that impressions or tendencies belong to the physical body'. There was a time when 'medical materialists', as William James called them, used to explain all emotions in terms of nerves and glands. For example, they say, 'Extraordinary consciousness is due to over-instigated nerves. Melancholy is due to a torpid liver. St. Paul's vision on the road to Damascus was possible simply because he was an epileptic, St. Theresa, the Christian mystic, was a hysterical woman. George Fox's discontent with the shams of the world was a symptom of a disordered colon'. So, everything is explained in terms of the bodily glands and nerves.

Fortunately, times have changed. Had Swami Vivekananda been living today he would have changed this view of his regarding the modern psychologists to a considerable extent. We find how modern psychologists, especially after the discoveries of Freud, are revealing to us the ways in which the mind exerts influence on the body. So also, the body has influence on the mind. Many modern psychologists and psychiatrists think of the 'body-mind' as a unified organism. Formerly, everything was interpreted in terms of the body. Now they have changed, for the better, to the 'body-mind'. Some psychologists go even farther. They stress the mind very much more than the body. Of the two, body and mind, the mind is the more important factor. Some remarkable examples may be cited.

A psychologist speaks of a lady who became a diabetic patient. She developed some pains which were diagnosed as diabetic

neuritis. She was happily married and had children. There was no special cause for worries. Yet she was ill. Psycho-analysis revealed that she had a deep-rooted hatred for her own mother—a tyrannical woman. She heaped a great deal of blame on her. As she relieved herself of her pent up grievances to the psychologist, she started feeling better. Her stiffness lessened, and the pain left her. After her treatment was over, she had learned that 'annoyance, rage, and fear caused more sugar in her blood than potatoes, candy, and ice-cream'.

There is another interesting illustration: There was a thriving business man who started having a mild stomach trouble. The pain in his stomach increased more and more, and the doctor diagnosed the trouble as ulcer. Strangely enough he felt the worst attacks in his own home; but when he went out on business trips he was almost free from the pain. The doctors studied the case and discovered that the cause of his trouble was his aggressive wife who did not allow him to relax. He confessed to the doctor: 'Sometimes I get so mad at that woman that I have to get out for a while. But she adores me and there isn't anything I can do to change her'. The doctor helped the man to realize that it was his own emotional conflict that created his illness and that it was he who had to change and not the wife. As he changed his attitude, he became free from the ulcer, and healthy again.

Now, these illustrations have a great moral for us all who are trying in our own humble way to live the spiritual life and purify our emotions. We ourselves must make a change while we want others to change.

There is the story of a king who was suffering from jaundice. The doctor advised him to see only green things. The king ordered that the whole city should be painted green. The people did not know what to do. The prime minister told the king, 'I have a better solution than that. Why don't you put on spectacles with green glasses'? By changing his glasses the king could see all



things green. By changing our glasses, coloured by our own emotions, tainted by our own mental troubles, we can see the world in a

new light, and even attain peace and calmness thereby.

(To be continued)

## GITA AND YOGA-VASISHTHA

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* is a book of unique importance in the sacred literature of the Hindus. The authorship of the book is attributed to Vālmiki, the immortal sage-poet of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. The person who actually composed this great work must have flourished at a much later age. The work bears unmistakable evidence to show that its author must have been a great poet, a great philosopher, a great saint, a great observer of men and things,—a teacher and writer of extraordinary abilities. But he so completely and successfully wiped out his own personality, while sending forth his magnificent work to the world for the cultural service of humanity for all times to come, that even the most acute research fails to arrive at any definite conclusion as to who he was and where and when he lived in a physical body. He evidently did not like to immortalize his own name. He lives in his work and his work is immortal. Such noble examples of self-effacement are not, however, rare in the cultural history of this land of spirituality, where the ideals of renunciation and service have always most deeply embraced each other. *Yoga-Vasiṣṭha* has lived and will live with the holy name of Valmiki associated with it. It has all along exercised a great influence upon the minds and hearts of the truth-seekers of India and will continue to do so in future.

The problem with which the book starts and round which all its various topics revolve is a fundamental problem in the domain of Indian culture and perhaps of the culture of entire humanity. The problem is stated thus:

*Mokṣasya kāraṇam karma jñānam vā  
mokṣa-sādhanaṁ,  
Ubhayam vā viniścitya ekam kathaya  
kāraṇam.*

'Is Karma (a life of well planned, well regulated activity) the cause of Moksha (deliverance from all bondage and sorrow)? Or is Jñāna (a life of intensive and exclusive pursuit of the ultimate Truth) the sole means to the attainment of Moksha? Or is a combination of the two (a life of harmony of Karma and Jnana) the real path to the realization of this ultimate ideal of human life? Kindly give a definite and decisive answer as to the true way to the perfect fulfilment of human life' (I.i.6). An earnest truth-seeker, Sutikshna, approaches Agasti, who is believed to be a truth-seer, and puts this question to him. The sage Agasti at once gives the direct and decisive answer:

*Ubhābhyām eva pakṣābhyām yathā khe  
pakṣiṇām gatiḥ,  
Tathaiva jñāna-karmabhyām j ā y a t e  
paramam padam.  
Kevalāt karmaṇo jñānāt nahi mokṣo-  
'bhijāyate,  
Kintūbhābhyām bhavet mokṣah sādhanam  
tūbhayam viduh.*

'Just as a bird flies in the sky with both the wings, so the *parama-pada* (the supreme end of life) can be attained through the co-operation of both Jnana and Karma. Moksha cannot be fully attained either by Karma alone or by Jnana alone, but by both together. Hence the enlightened teachers know both as



the means to the realization of perfection' (I.i. 7-8).

Thus the problem with which *Yoga-Vasishtha* proposes to deal and the solution at which it will arrive as the result of its lengthy discourses carried on in thirty-two thousand Shlokas are both stated in the clearest terms in the very beginning of the introductory chapter. It is to be noted that this is the problem and this is the solution in the universally adored *Bhagavad Gita* as well, which has been recognized as the linguistic self-expression of the very soul of Indian culture. In human life Karma must be enlightened by Jnana, and Jnana must find dynamic self-expression in Karma. Man is a rational active being in this divine world order. His rational nature demands that he must realize in his consciousness the ultimate Truth of himself and this world order and put his life perfectly in tune with this Truth. His active nature demands that the divine energy individualized in him must be developed and refined and perfected and freely expressed in the world system in the form of voluntary work.

The demand for perfect self-realization, which is inherent in the essential character of every man, involves the demand for the perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth as well as the demand for the manifestation of his individuality in the form of the best type of work he is capable of for the good of the world he lives in. *Sādhana*, which means a systematic, well regulated, voluntary effort for perfect self-realization, must accordingly consist in the harmonious development and refinement and illumination of a man's whole being, rational as well as dynamic, intellectual as well as practical, spiritual as well as ethical. The rational and the dynamic aspects of human nature cannot be separated from each other, and neither of them can be fully developed and perfected except in the closest embrace with the other. A man's Jnana is not perfect until and unless it illumines his whole being with the light of Truth and his actions become the natural self-expressions of Truth realization. His Karma also cannot

be perfect, until and unless it is thoroughly inspired by Truth and it flows out from his enlightened nature as its spontaneous self-expression.

Jnana and Karma are, therefore, aptly compared to the two wings of a flying bird. Man has to live and move freely, smoothly, joyfully, and beautifully in the atmosphere of this world. So long as he fails to put his life in perfect harmony with Truth and Order—*satya* and *ṛta*—of this atmosphere, he is under bondage, he has to suffer sorrows of various kinds, he is, with every movement of his body and mind, tormented and tortured by the apparently hostile forces of the world. Moksha consists in the realization of this perfect harmony,—the experience of the blissful unity of the ultimate Truth and Order of one's own existence with the Truth and Order of the world of the infinitely diverse forms of objective realities, and the consequent attainment of perfect freedom and uninterrupted bliss in living and moving and acting in this world. This is not the ideal of Mukti (deliverance or release) from life and the world,—not the ideal of Mukti after death—but the ideal of Mukti in life itself, the ideal of perfect freedom and joy in the very world. For the realization of this Mukti, the systematic cultivation of Jnana and Karma in union with each other is necessary in human life.

The *viśāda* (sadness) and *vairāgya* (aversion to the world and the present worldly duties) of the great hero Arjuna is set forth in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the occasion for the philosophical discourses on Jnana and Karma and the true basis of their harmony, given by the divine charioteer, Sri Krishna, with the purpose of freeing Arjuna's mind and heart from such a one-sided view of the ideal of human life and bringing him back into the proper enlightened attitude for the performance of worldly duties with the mind and heart concentrated upon the ultimate Truth of himself and the universe. Just in the same way, the *viśāda* and *vairāgya* of the divine hero Sri Rama, is set forth in the *Yoga-Vasishtha* as the occasion for still more elaborate and variegated discourses, given by Vasishtha, with the pur-



pose of enlightening his mind and heart with the ultimate Truth about the world order and the human life in it and thereby removing his present sadness and aversion to worldly duties due to a partial and imperfect view of Truth and creating in him an enthusiasm for the performance of his royal duties with his mind and heart fixed on Truth. As the *upakrama* (introduction) in both the cases is similar, so the *upasamhāra* (conclusion) also is similar. Both Arjuna and Sri Rama, after attentively listening to the discourses, confess that their previous state of *vairāgya* was due to ignorance about the Supreme Truth, that their problems are now most satisfactorily solved and that they are fully convinced of the possibility of perfect harmony between Jnana and Karma and of the necessity of such harmonization between them in actual life. Arjuna takes up his Gāndiva (the celebrated bow of that name) and engages himself in the all-out battle of Kurukshetra. Sri Rama follows the heroic Vishvāmitra to destroy the Rakshasas.

Thus the object of these two great authoritative treatises appears to be the same, viz. the union of Jnana and Karma. Neither of them supports the ascetic view of Jnana or the ritualistic view of Karma. Both maintain that Karma should principally consist in the faithful discharge of the worldly duties—domestic, social, national, and humanitarian duties—suited to one's capacity, temperament, hereditary obligations, status in society and that all such duties should be performed from the spiritual point of view, with the mind and heart fixed upon the Absolute Reality—the Supreme Truth of the Self and the cosmic order. Both maintain that Jnana essentially consists in the realization of the Supreme Truth, which should illumine the whole being of a man, which should spiritualize his entire nature, which should always make him feel the spiritual unity of himself and all beings of the universe, which should reveal to his consciousness the illusoriness or unsubstantiality of all differences in the world of his sense-experience and the pure Spirit—pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss—as the true Self and substratum of all. It is with

such Jnana within that Karma has to be performed in the world and worldly life has to be properly sustained and its purpose fulfilled. This union of Jnana and Karma is called by the name of true Yoga in both. The *Gita* says that such Yoga was known to and practised by the Raja-rishis of old, such as Manu, Ikshvāku, etc. In the *Yoga-Vasishtha* also these Raja-rishis are off and on cited as authorities in the exposition of this Yoga. The Gurus quoted in the *Yoga-Vasishtha* are more prominently of the type of Raja-rishis than of the type of ascetics.

*Yoga-Vasishtha* starts with Vairāgya Prakaraṇa. Sri Rama, even while hardly in his teens, having returned from a pleasure tour in some important places of pilgrimage, is suddenly overcome by a spirit of despondency. Deep reflection upon the vanity of all human achievements, the worthlessness of all things which are looked upon as worthy of pursuit by common men of the world, the unsubstantiality of human life itself, depresses his heart and mind and causes an aversion to the world. His reflections are described in detail in a large number of chapters. Various problems with regard to various aspects of human life are presented most poetically as well as logically. He demands answers to his questions from the Rishis and Munis who are present in the royal court. All are most deeply impressed by the way in which the young prince puts forward the most fundamental problems of human life. Vasishtha, who is universally respected as the living embodiment of Jnana, is requested by Vishvāmitra and other sages to solve Rama's problems and to bring him back to the normal state.

While admiring the young prince's extraordinary wisdom and insight, his depth of feeling and acuteness of understanding, the sages present there are convinced that this sort of *viveka* and *vairāgya* is based on the want of a comprehensive outlook on the life and the world and should, therefore, be regarded as a temporary *moha* on his part—



a state of bewilderment due to the absence of the realization of complete Truth. They are sure that as soon as he gets the knowledge of complete Truth, his despondency and his aversion to the duties of his life will automa-

tically vanish. At the request of the great sages, Vasishtha, who is chosen as the fittest person to impart this knowledge to him, begins his discourse.

*(To be continued)*

## A SAINT AND A SINNER

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

It was sometime at the end of 1880. Sri Ramakrishna's fame had spread all over educated Calcutta, thanks to the eloquence and powerful pens of Keshab Chandra Sen and his Brahmo followers. In their wake came earnest devotees of the Master like Ramachandra Dutta and Manomohan Mitra, to whom Surendra Nath Mitra, a neighbour, confided that he had lost all peace of mind and pleasure in life, so much so that he felt like committing suicide. He was a man of about thirty years of age, with a strong and handsome body and a bright complexion. Outwardly he was rather rude and blunt; but inwardly he was soft and generous. In matters of faith he was indifferent rather than atheistic. Surendra imbibed the spirit of the age, which demanded of him a logical mind depending on its own resources for worldly welfare as also for dissolving psychological conflicts. He was well placed in life, earning a decent income of Rs. 300 or 400 per month as the head clerk in a British firm. But he fell a prey to some vices of his environment including drinking. At the time we are writing of, neither Ram nor Manomohan could diagnose the cause of his agony; nevertheless, they offered to take him to the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar with them. At this the sinner said, 'It's all very good that you respect him; why should you take me there? I shall be a misfit there—like a crane among swans.<sup>1</sup> I have seen

enough of that. If he makes any irrelevant remark, I shall give his ear a good boxing!'

Despite such irreverence and unwillingness Surendra one day went to the Saint of Dakshineswar (Sri Ramakrishna) with his two neighbours. Arriving at the Saint's room, he sat unceremoniously without any exchange of courtesy. The Saint was seated among his devotees, talking of God and God realization. There was a sweetness and a ring of sincerity in his voice that attracted the sinner and kept him spellbound. His manly spirit had not so far acknowledged any other guide except his own resourcefulness, though unfortunately that independence had brought him to the brink of a cataclysm. And what strange things was this Saint talking? 'It is no doubt necessary', said he, 'to undergo spiritual discipline. But there are two kinds of aspirants. The nature of the one kind is like that of the young monkey and the nature of the other kind is like that of the kitten. The young monkey with great exertion, somehow clings to its mother. Likewise, there are some aspirants who think that in order to realize God they must repeat His name a certain number of times, meditate on Him for a certain period, and practise a certain amount of austerity. An aspirant of this kind makes his own efforts to catch hold of God. But the kitten, of itself, cannot cling to its mother. It lies on the ground and cries "mew, mew". It leaves

<sup>1</sup> Surendra was punning on the word 'Hansa', which means either a swan or the soul; and Parama-

hansa means a Sannyasin of high order or sarcastically, 'a great swan'.



everything to its mother. The mother cat puts it sometimes on a bed, sometimes on the roof behind a pile of wood. She carries the kitten in her mouth hither and thither. The kitten does not know how to cling to the mother. Likewise, there are some aspirants who cannot practise spiritual discipline by calculating about Japa or the period of meditation. All that they do is to cry to God. God hears their cry and cannot keep Himself away'. The Saint also added that those children who cling to the father, while walking over a steep narrow pathway, run the risk of falling down, but the children who are taken care of by the father himself have no such fear. And he concluded by asking, 'Why do people behave like the young monkey and not the kitten?'

It struck Surendra that though the Saint was apparently speaking spontaneously without personal reference and without any question having been asked, in a mystical way he addressed him and him alone. That lesson became immediately engraved on Surendra's heart. He came to conquer, but returned defeated. At the time of departure the sinner prostrated before the Saint and henceforth it became a part of his routine to visit Dakshineswar regularly. Besides he would now proudly declare, 'Mine is not an ordinary Guru. I went to box his ears, but it is he who boxed mine'. Moreover, he believed that through the parable of the kitten the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) had hinted that he had accepted all responsibility for him.

Those who are acquainted with the life of the Bengali dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh, another libertine who came to scoff but remained to pray, will find an affinity with that of Surendra. The latter, too, was aware of this parallelism. So, one day, when the Master glanced affectionately at Surendra and pointing to Girish said, 'You talk of having lived a wild life, but here is one. . . .'. The Master had not finished when Surendra added, 'Yes, sir, he is my elder brother in that respect'.<sup>2</sup> Those, again, who are steeped in the

Vaishnava literature of Bengal would find a still further similarity between these two sinners and Jagāi and Mādhāi, two ruffians of Nadia, one of whom, becoming infuriated at the singing of Hari's name in chorus by the followers of Sri Chaitanya, struck Nityānanda with a potsherd. Nothing daunted, the saint, with a bleeding head, stepped forward and embraced the assailant saying, 'Though you beat me with a potsherd, should the flow of my love stop?' Love won back both those sinners of Nadia to the path of virtue, and so it did again the lost souls of Calcutta. Surendra and the other devotees at Dakshineswar, in those early days, were conscious of this winning power of the grace of the Master; and yet they wondered why Surendra did not change overnight. So, one day (January 1882), Kedar pleaded with the Master, 'Sir, if you have graciously drawn these souls to you, why do you punish them any more? Be benevolent for a time so that they may be saved for ever'. The Saint replied, 'What can I do? What power have I? If the Mother wills, She can do so'. And with total indifference he moved away and sat quietly under the Bakula tree. This was too much for Surendra. He burst into tears and said that it were better if he had not come there; for formerly he committed sins out of the free promptings of his heart with a clear conscience; but now he was doing the same thing under the guise of a devotee—he was now not only a sinner but a hypocrite too. The tears moved the Saint, and he blessed him saying, 'May Mother grant happiness to you all'. These words bore fruit. The later life of Surendra was wonderful and for this change the overflowing love of Sri Ramakrishna was not a little responsible. Surendra, too, co-operated heartily. Busy as he was in his office, he had hardly any time to think of God, and yet the Saint captured his heart so irresistibly that his little intervals were all full of him. He would somehow dash through his day's work and run to Dakshineswar even on week days. One day he felt the pull so much that working against time

<sup>2</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*



he dragged himself out of office in time to reach Dakshineswar before dusk. The Saint was just then going out to Calcutta, and what wonder!—when asked about his destination he replied that he was starting for Surendra's house! Overjoyed, Surendra took him in his carriage and brought him to his own home.

We have, however, to remember that though Sri Ramakrishna loved Surendra, he never relaxed his strong controlling grasp. It was some time in the summer of 1881. Sri Ramakrishna was hearing with rapt attention the music in Surendra's house when the latter stepped forward with a costly and beautiful garland of flowers to be placed on the Master's neck. The Saint, in disgust, snatched it from Surendra and threw it aside. Surendra's pride was wounded. So he went to the verandah and, in an offended and bitter tone, told the other devotees, with tears dropping down his cheeks, 'A village Brahmin from the western side of the Ganges that he is, what does he know of such garlands! What a lot I had to pay for it! So, in anger, I ordered all the remaining garlands to be given to others. But now I realize, it is my fault—God cares little for money. I am proud—why should He accept my worship? To me life is now a meaningless thing—it may as well end'. In the meantime the scene in the hall inside had changed—Sri Ramakrishna was dancing with the rejected garland in one of his hands and the other hand swinging gracefully with the ecstatic movements of his delicate body. When the dance was over, he said to Surendra with great affection, 'Won't you treat me to something?' and at the latter's invitation went inside to partake of some dainty dishes. Strange are the ways of saints and sinners!

The Master was fully conscious of the spiritual stature and needs of his disciple and though he chastised Surendra at times, he never allowed his spirits to droop through sheer despair—he led Surendra slowly but surely through a path of cautious progress. One day, at Dakshineswar, he told Surendra, 'Come here every now and then. Nangtā (meaning his naked Guru) used to say that a

brass pot must be polished every day: otherwise it gets stained. One should live constantly in the company of holy men. The renunciation of "woman and gold" is for Sannyasins—it is not for you. Now and then you should go into solitude and call on God with a yearning heart. Your renunciation should be mental. Unless a devotee is of the heroic type, he cannot pay attention to both God and the world. . . . Why do I say all this to you? You work in a merchant's office. . . . You tell lies at the office. Then why do I eat the food you offer me? Because you give your money in charity; you give away more than you earn. The seed of the melon is bigger than the fruit—as the saying goes.'<sup>3</sup> Surendra asked why he cannot meditate. The Master knew at once that the disciple was aiming too high, considering his spiritual strength. But instead of giving him a rude shock by pointing out the fact, the Saint wanted to know if Surendra now and then remembered God. Surendra replied, 'I repeat the Divine Mother's name now and then. Lying in bed, I repeat Her name and fall asleep'. 'That's enough' said the Master encouragingly, 'You remember Her, don't you?'

The reader has got a glimpse of the intimate relationship between the Master and his strange disciple. This was not the result of a single meeting—but it was finally established through a process of long communion to a brief account of which we now turn. Surendra was addicted to wine, and that a little inordinately. This militated against the moral sense of Ramachandra Dutta, brought up in orthodox Vaishnava tradition as he was. He argued with Surendra that unless this immoral habit was given up, the public would scandalize the Master himself. Surendra retorted, 'Though you are so worried over this trifle, Sri Ramakrishna never showed any dislike, though he must be fully aware of the fact. If it is really so bad, would not the Master chastise me? And as for giving it up,

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



I am prepared to try my utmost, even at the cost of my life, if only the Master should command'. So the two friends went to Dakshineswar for a decision. The Saint, as was his wont in such circumstances, began talking spontaneously about drinking, and addressing Surendra said, 'Look here! Whatever you take, you should first offer to Mother; and take care that you do not become tipsy—that your head does not reel and your legs do not falter. The more you think of Her the less will be your addiction to drinking. She is the source of all bliss. If you can realize Her, you will attain to spontaneous hilarity'. And to give a visual demonstration of that state, the Saint fell into an ecstatic mood and sang with great emotion:

Behold my Mother playing with Shiva, lost in  
ecstasy of joy;  
Drunk with a draught of celestial wine, She reels  
and yet She does not fall . . .<sup>4</sup>

The Master went on, 'First there will be the elation of drink, and then will follow the bliss of communion'. The Master did not rebuke Surendra, nor did he prescribe a mere negative code—but he rather invited him to positive effort by giving his habit a new direction for attaining a higher goal. 'Thenceforward Surendra acted accordingly. At evening he freed himself from all preoccupation and after offering a little wine to Mother Kālī would quaff it; but instead of intoxication he would get an inspiration for prayer and meditation. At that time tears would trickle down his cheeks, from his mouth would issue the words, "Mother, Mother", and now and then he would lose himself in deep meditation—a sight that would move the worst atheist! At such moments he avoided all talks of worldly things'.<sup>5</sup>

A striking change had now come over Surendra's mind and he went to Dakshineswar every Sunday; but he could not entirely eradicate his former habit. So, out of self-

reproach, he avoided going there one Sunday. His friends reported to the Saint that he had again lapsed into the company of his former associates. At this the Saint said, 'Well, he has still some hankering for enjoyment—let him satisfy it for a few days; and then he will have none—he will become pure'. The next Sunday, when Surendra came, but out of shame kept at a distance, the Master said, with a smile, 'Hallo, why do you keep aloof like a thief? Come nearer'. When Surendra did so, the Master fell into a trance and said, 'Well, when people visit certain places, why do they not take Mother with them? If the Mother is in their company, they are saved from many evil deeds!' Light flashed on Surendra's heart. All his efforts to get rid of his disease had so far proved abortive; but in Sri Ramakrishna's words he now discovered the remedy—he learnt the process by following which he would be cured.<sup>6</sup>

A shrewd man of the world that Surendra was, it was not for nothing that he surrendered himself completely to the Master. We know that he was at first a non-believer and a rationalist. By Sri Ramakrishna's touch he now became a believer and a devotee. But the belief had yet to go deeper into his heart. Mother Kali attracted him and Sri Ramakrishna too occupied his thoughts; he was now intellectually convinced that there was some sort of identity between Mother Kali and Sri Ramakrishna, but full realization was yet to come. One day, as he sat before Mother Kali, in his shrine, within closed doors, the thought occurred to him, 'If Sri Ramakrishna appears in my shrine, then only I shall be convinced of his divinity'. And, lo! There stood before him none other than the Master! Surendra had no longer any doubt. We get a public declaration of this conviction from Surendra himself at Cossipore (13th April 1886). Sri Ramakrishna was then preparing for the final departure, and the anxious disciples came to him oftener than usual. Surendra reached there that day at eight at

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Sri Sri Ramakrishna-charita* in Bengali by Gurudas Burman, p. 191. The book was published in 1909.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-194.



night, straight from his office, with some oranges and a pair of garlands, and said with emotion, 'I have come after finishing all my duties in the office, because I thought, "What is the good of standing on two boats at the same time?"' So I finished my duties first and then came here. Today is the first day of the Bengali year, and it is also Tuesday. I did not go to Kalighat (to worship Kali); I thought it would be enough if I saw him who is Kali

Herself and who has rightly understood Her'. He also told the devotees that although he could not come on the previous day, holy as it was, being the last day of the Bengali year, he had decorated the Master's picture with flowers. The Master heard all this and told 'M', 'Ah, what devotion!'

(To be continued)

<sup>7</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

## RAMAKRISHNA MONASTERY IN AMERICA

### DEDICATION OF STATUE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SISTER AMIYA

It was more than fifty years ago, in 1893, that Swami Vivekananda first came to the United States of America and presented himself as a delegate at the World's Parliament of Religions, which was being held at Chicago.

That he should arrive as an unknown and uninvited representative of Hinduism, or Vedanta, with neither the required credentials nor the backing of an organized church or religious body, meant nothing to him. He had a message to give to the world—the message of Freedom, and it was characteristic of him that he chose to deliver it from a country which had fought for and attained its own.

No obstacle on earth could stop him, and nothing could withstand the strength and force of his tremendous personality. Swami Vivekananda was his own authority; he was the truth he came to give, and, by his first public utterance, he brought the warm and responsive American audience to its feet—and to his own.

Intermittently through the seven years that followed, Swamiji travelled all over the country, teaching and disseminating the principles of Vedanta, and preparing the way for those who were to come after him. At

the end of 1900 he returned to his own country for the last time, and two years later, on the Fourth of July 1902, he entered Mahāsamādhi.

'Never the Spirit was born, dieth it never'. Nor does that mighty Spirit sleep. Immanent in Swamiji's every printed word and in his every familiar portrait, there is an unmistakable vibration of life and vitality which neither time nor death can destroy.

It was not without hesitation that I undertook to write an outline of the history of the Ramakrishna Monastery at Trabuco Canyon, California, in general and an account of Swamiji's statue dedication ceremony in particular. For one person to present an overall picture of such an impressive occasion is quite impossible. Every participator has his own individual experience and corresponding reaction, and each one feels the spirit of an event in proportion to his own understanding and inner response. Therefore, it is possible for me to try to portray the happenings of that memorable day only as I myself experienced them.

The early history of the Ramakrishna Monastery at Trabuco—the first of its kind in America—is a pertinent and an interesting one. It is a story in which Gerald Heard, the inter-

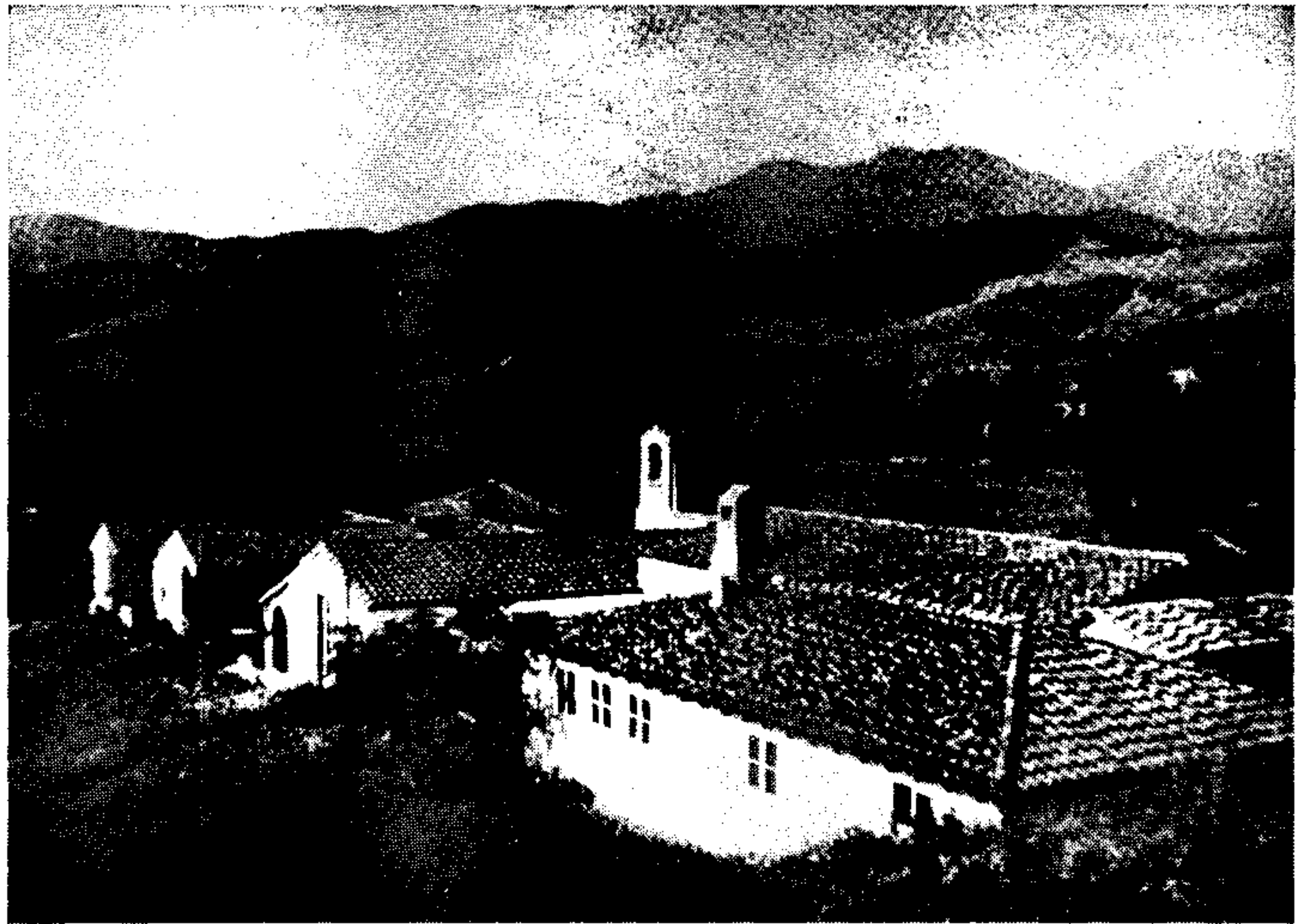


nationally known writer and lecturer, played an immensely important role.

It was about the time of his first meeting with Swami Prabhavananda, in 1939, that Mr. Heard, and a few interested friends, purchased approximately three hundred acres of land in the rolling hills of Trabuco Canyon. Situated as it is about sixty miles to the south of Los Angeles and a little over twenty miles

inland from the Pacific coast, the location was, in every way, idyllically suited to its purpose—the establishment of a college for the study and dissemination of religion and psychology. A board of trustees was elected to manage the business affairs of the trust property, and Mr. Heard became the recognized spiritual head. From many parts of the world men and women came to study under his tutelage, and for almost ten years the college served its appointed purpose.

In the meantime, the Vedanta Society, which Swami Prabhavananda had started in Hollywood more than twenty years ago, was steadily expanding. In addition to the gift of property given to the Society in 1945, which was dedicated as the Sārādā Convent at Santa Barbara, in 1947, the Society had earlier bought a small lot and cottage adjoining the Hollywood property. The cottage was converted into a temporary monastery and used to accommodate the several young men who had joined the Society with the hope of becoming monastic members of the Ramakrishna Order. But, as time passed and their number increased, the need of a larger



RAMAKRISHNA MONASTERY, TRABUCO

and more permanent monastery became imperative.

From its earliest beginnings it had been Mr. Heard's cherished hope that, one day, Swami Prabhavananda would take charge of the Trabuco establishment. A reflection of this hope may be seen in the unusual plan of the red-tiled, white-brick buildings. The enormous kitchen, the large living quarters, and the well-stocked library of religious and classical books; the smaller, cell-like bedrooms opening on to the long, cloistered corridors and set a little apart from the whole, and the large meditation hall,—all bear many of the distinctive features and requirements of a modern Western monastery.

Absorbed in his own activities, it was not until the spring of 1949 that Mr. Heard learned of Swami Prabhavananda's pressing need of a monastery, and approached him with his most generous offer of the entire establishment at Trabuco. Because of his keen interest in the Vedanta work, Mr. Heard persuaded the trustees to make a deed of gift of the Trabuco property to the Vedanta Society, with the understanding that it be used as a monastery.



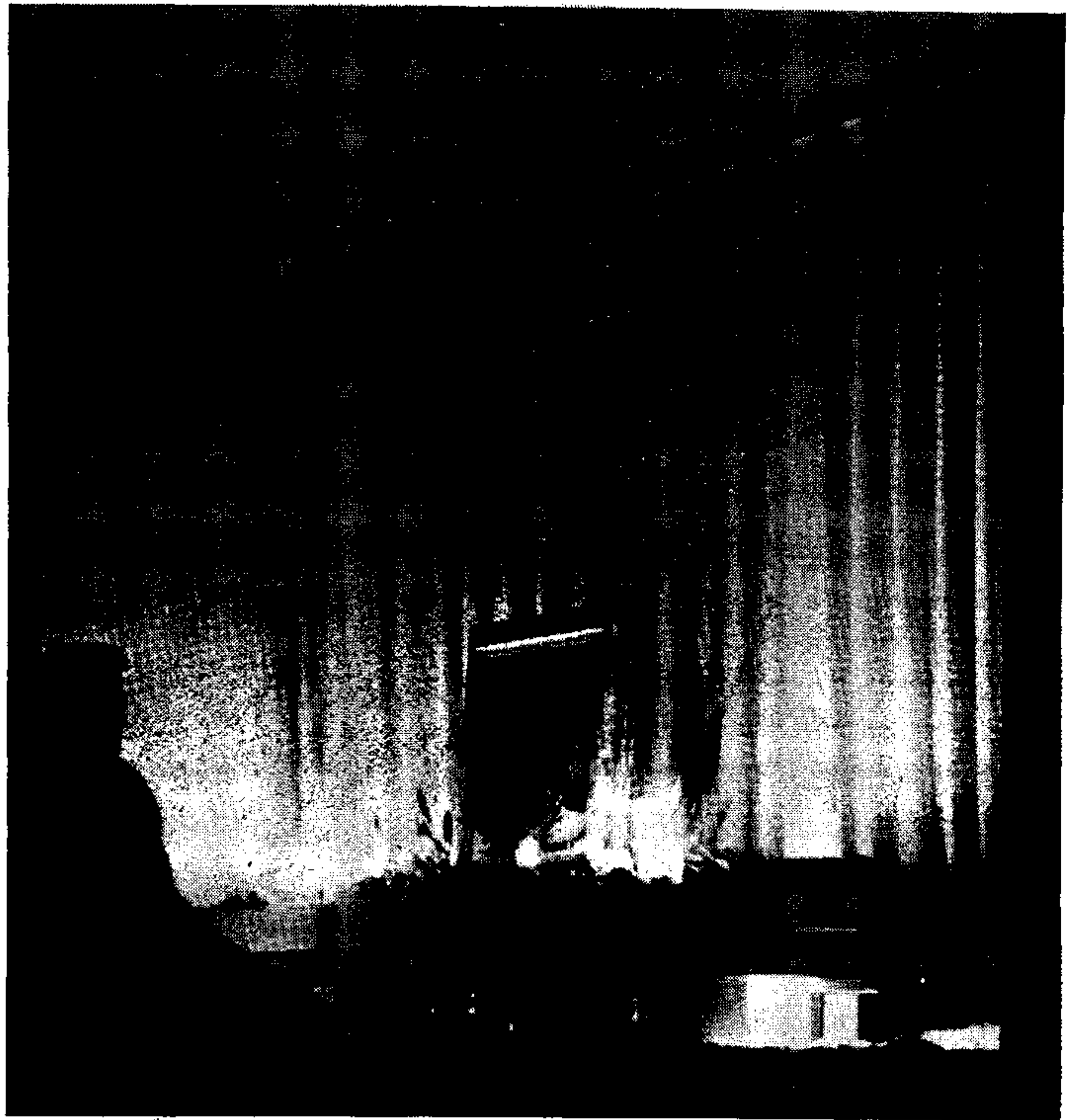
The business transactions moved rapidly, so that, in September of the same year, the former Trabuco College property and all its furnishings were transferred to the Vedanta Society of Southern California, and dedicated to its present use as the Ramakrishna Monastery.

The nucleus of the first recognized monastery of the Ramakrishna Order in this vast country of mass production, would seem small indeed by comparison, were quantity alone its criterion. Throughout the ages, many have been called to the monastic way of life, but few have been chosen. The reason for this consistent minority is not far to seek. No man can serve two masters; he who would choose the life of the Spirit must renounce the life of the flesh.

It was on the 4th of July 1951 that the statue of Swami Vivekananda was dedicated at the monastery at Trabuco. Being a national holiday, it was possible for most of the members and friends of the Society to be present.

One of the major improvements which the inmates have recently made at the monastery is the installation of a large shrine, designed and made by one of them. Beautiful in its stark simplicity, with its single portrait of Sri Ramakrishna, this important addition has transformed the former meditation hall into a shrine-room of unusual charm.

When the morning worship was over, hymns



SHRINE OF THE MONASTERY

were sung in Bengali by the Sisters of the convent. The Brahmachārins then sang Swamiji's own hymn to Shiva. Other songs followed, sung in unison by the whole group, two of them being from a group of songs written and set to music of his own composition by one of the Brahmacharins.

When the service in the shrine-room was ended, the Swamis Prabhavananda, Pavitrananda, and Areshananda led the way to the inner courtyard, where, facing the entrance, and protected from a direct frontal approach by a newly constructed lotus pool, Swamiji's statue dominated the scene.

When I first saw the statue of Swamiji I was not greatly impressed. Something was lacking. Perfectly proportioned, and faithfully fashioned, it was technically and artistically flawless. The renowned sculptress, Malvina





STATUE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Hoffman, had given it everything that a true artist could give, and yet, because it lacked that intangible *something*, that sense of *aliveness*, which permeates Swamiji's written word and printed likeness, it appeared lifeless and inert. But only for a while.

On the very morning of the day of his Mahasamadhi, Swamiji, while in an exalted spiritual mood, was heard saying to himself, 'If there were another Vivekananda, he would have understood what Vivekananda has done'. This revelation has never been denied, nor is it likely ever to be challenged. Yet, during that solemn moment of dedication, when Swami Pavitrananda hung a garland of many-coloured flowers around Swamiji's statue, one could not but feel that the humility and the reverence of those who were there to pay him homage, more than compensated for any possible lack of knowledge they might have of Swamiji's true greatness.

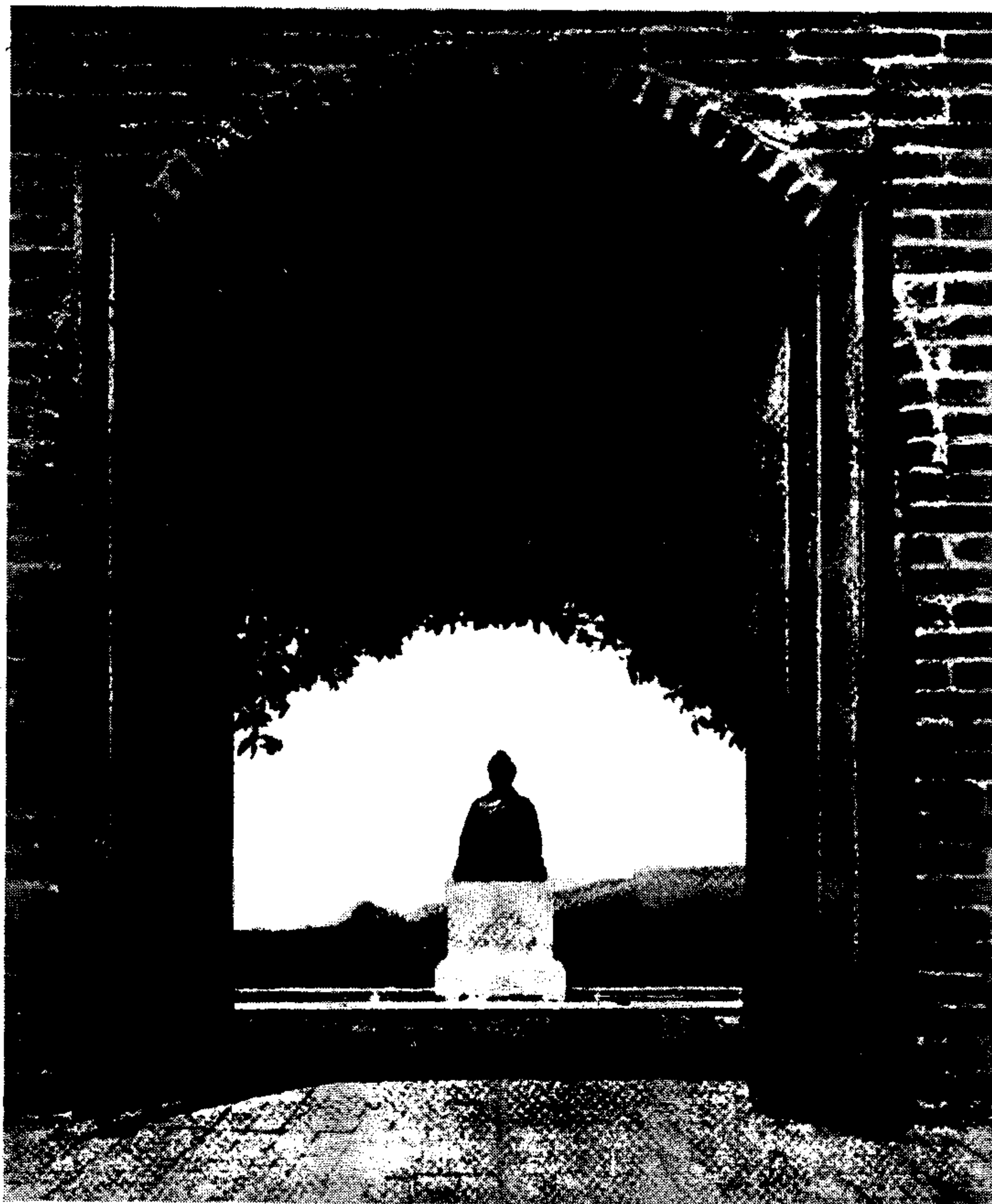
I stared at the image before me. It seemed impossible to believe that Swamiji could not hear that mighty paean of praise—the *Song to Swamiji*—which sounded forth the majesty, and the power, and the glory of his soul! A hush had fallen upon the listeners, and I

wondered if any of them felt as I did at that moment. I could not know, nor can I now adequately express what I myself then felt. But this I do know: As I looked at the statue and listened to that perfect symphony of swelling sound, I sensed, rather than saw, an unmistakable mobility in the chiselled features, while a softness, almost as of flesh, seemed to replace the rigidity of the sculptured bronze. And in that moment I truly felt that Swamiji had come, not only to accept the homage of his devotees but also to vivify, and so make complete, the work of the artist. A smile seemed to play about his mouth, while his eyes, though remaining half-closed, gave an impression of veiled light—and life. And the hands, though still, and folded one within the other, seemed to have relaxed into an attitude of indrawn, humble acceptance.

I use the word humble deliberately. Only the truly great can be truly humble, and Swamiji, because of the very magnitude and nobility of his nature, would surely have been the first among men to accept adoration with a humility proportionate to his greatness.

A Hindu luncheon, prepared and served by the monks, followed the ceremony. A short





ENTRANCE TO THE MONASTERY

programme of violin music filled the interval between the luncheon and the speeches which followed.

Among the many distinguished speakers were Mr. Brown, President of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, and John van Druten.

One of the remaining few who had personally known Swami Vivekananda during his stay in California; Mr. Brown was able to recount many interesting stories and anecdotes of those early days of Swamiji's work in America. Time had not dimmed his memories of the past, nor was the significance of the

present 'holy occasion' lost upon him.

As a playwright and dramatist, Mr. van Druten was able to recognize and present Swamiji as he actually was—one of the most outstanding and dramatic figures ever to appear on the world's vast stage.

Mr. van Druten said:

'Swami Vivekananda was a very special person, particularly so for all of us in America. He was our own especial messenger, our own personal link—and designed as just that—with the eternal religion of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna has always been, I think, a little remote to a great many of us. I think that quite a number of us have felt that if we had ever met Sri Ramakrishna, we

would have found difficulties in establishing relations with him. There would have been not only the language difficulty, which can be covered by translation, but a greater and less surmountable problem in establishing a real contact of thought, an integral pattern between ourselves and him, through which his message could have been brought into our Western lives so that we could understand each other. The pattern of our living, of our worlds, were too far apart.

'Sri Ramakrishna was an unlearned man, to whom the intellect was a lesser and not-wholly-to-be-trusted function. He had never travelled. The significances of Western life were unknown to him. He was a man so deeply immersed in God, so close to the true Godhead, that he was aware always of himself as its identification, and the concerns, the



troubles, and the pleasures of our lives here could have meant almost nothing to him. As, indeed, in the end, they can mean nothing to God.

'But there came from him our own interpreter, the human messenger designed for us. This was Swami Vivekananda, with his amazing gift for the English language, and his great understanding of the needs of the people of this country. If we look at his own background, his own upbringing, we can see why he should have had them. He was a young man, literate and studious: far more studious, I would imagine, than most of us present here today, and in far more subjects. To him, as a young man, the intellect came first. He judged everything by it. He judged his religion by it, and he felt unsatisfied. It was all reported, all second-hand. He knew that the only teacher for him was a teacher who had seen God. That was his first question to Sri Ramakrishna: "Have you seen God?" And Ramakrishna answered: "But of course I have. I have seen God more visibly, more tangibly, than I see you now. . . . But who wants to see God? . . ."

'Vivekananda knew that this was the only teacher for him. But that was not enough, for long. He needed more. He needed the experience for himself, so that he could know that it was true—true for him—and not a form of insanity, as it had grown to seem. It shocked him intellectually . . . that any man should be able to say of himself: "I am my creator. I am on the same rank as my creator. Everything is God. This cup is God, this jug is God, I am God". That is either blasphemy, or it is complete nonsense, or both. "The man who says that—and if I believe him—has hypnotized me".

'And then, through the grace of Ramakrishna, it happened. He knew it. He saw it. The jug was God, the street-gratings were God; he was God. The next step was obvious. If you have seen something, known something, if you are quite, quite sure of something, and of something truly extraordinary, what is there to do but to talk about it?

'From then on, from the death of Ramakrishna, that was the message of Vivekananda, carried burningly for a brief life. It was so especially in this country, where he knew, through his own experience, so much that no other teacher could have given to the people of America. He knew them, instinctively, as brothers and sisters. His opening remark at the Parliament of Religions was "Sisters and Brothers of America". I do not know why that should have seemed so ringing a remark that it aroused applause for almost two minutes;

but it did. The establishment of that complete brotherhood happened in those words.

'From that moment, he knew his audience, and they knew him. He knew the intellectual approach that had been his own, and he knew, too, that that was the best approach to the Western mind. It was the Advaita approach, the approach of Jnana Yoga. He knew the conflict that he must solve for them in the theories of the personal and impersonal God. Perhaps one of his most important sayings is that God who is completely impersonal, when seen through the eyes of the sense, becomes personal. He made that clear to many who listened to him.

'Was Vivekananda a monk? Not in the sense in which we picture a monk nowadays. He was not the pious, gentle, wandering, and remote monk. But he was a monk, all the same. Annie Besant said of him: "Perhaps he is a monk, but he is a warrior monk". That, I think, is the phrase we should remember when we think of Vivekananda. He was never frightened, and never timid. He upset his audiences right and left in this country. He attacked them for not being Christian. "If you want to live, go back to being Christians; you are not a Christian country", he told an audience in Detroit, and he drove two-thirds of the audience out of the hall. But the other third knew exactly what he meant, that he was not denouncing Christianity, but that he was denouncing the narrow, perverted, self-seeking forms of Christianity that the average American employed so righteously and without sight or vision. . . .

And so, for many, the day of Swamiji's festival was over.

Before leaving the monastery I returned to the courtyard to take my leave of Swamiji. By this time the surface of the pool was an almost solid mass of floating colour. Fanned by opposing breezes, the flower offerings had drifted to the centre and were swirling around the base of the statue. Swamiji had accepted the offerings of his devotees.

'And there, in that perfect setting, I left him. No longer an inert composition of lifeless bronze, the figure of Swamiji rests in an attitude of quiet calm and infinite patience, while his brooding spirit hovers over all. Facing the entrance, he watches and waits, silently offering to all who come the promise of ultimate peace and the blessed assurance of eternal Freedom.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

As the *Prabuddha Bharata* enters the fifty-seventh year of its career, we offer our cordial greetings and good wishes to our readers, friends, and all others, in every part of the world, whose valued sympathy and co-operation have helped us to carry on our humble work of serving the cause of Truth, Peace, and Brotherhood. . . .

Sri Sārādāmani Devi—The Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna,—whose photograph appears on the Frontispiece in this issue,—was born on the 22nd December, 1853 at Jayarambati in the district of Bankura in West Bengal. With her pristine purity, overflowing affection, and profound spirituality, she was not only the perfect embodiment of womanhood at its best but also a spiritual guide of the highest order to whom innumerable aspirants owed their inner illumination and unfoldment. Her Hundredth Birthday comes off in the latter part of December this year; her Birth Centenary will be observed all over the world during the period between December 1953 and December 1954. . . .

This issue opens with a short poem—*The Divine Awakener*,—an offering of heart-felt devotion, by Starson Gosse. . . .

The well-known poem '*Kālī the Mother*' by Swami Vivekananda, the original of which is reproduced in facsimile, was written during the days of the Swami's pilgrimage to Kshir Bhavani in Kashmir, when he was in a high spiritual state. In this connection, Sister Nivedita writes: 'His brain was teeming with thoughts, he said one day, and his fingers would not rest till they were written down. It was that same evening that we came back . . . and found waiting for us . . . his manuscript lines on "*Kali the Mother*". Writing in a fever of inspiration, he had fallen on the

floor, when he had finished, . . . exhausted with his own intensity'. . . .

*The Way to Spiritual Stability* by Swami Turiyananda is culled and translated from the Swami's inspiring and instructive Letters in Bengali. . . .

There is no doubt in discerning minds that a new world order is seen in the offing. Virile, awakened, and independent *India* has a great part to play in ushering in the *New World Order*. In this noble task, the leaders and the people have to exert themselves unsparingly, keeping their eyes on the eternal values and ideals for which our ancient land stands. . . .

Mr. Gerald Heard, internationally known writer and lecturer, describes his approach to Vedanta, under the title—*What Vedanta means to Me*. . . .

The leaders of every country are striving to the utmost to avert war and ensure peace. But the international situation presents a sombre prospect. *Who are the Peacemakers?* This momentous question is posed by Swami Tejasananda, who also sets forth the correct answer in this thought-provoking article. . . .

'If death is the end of life, why should life or labour be?'—asks the poet. Almost every religion speaks of 'life after death' and Hinduism boldly proclaims that the goal of life is the attainment of immortality. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, writes on the rare and lofty theme—*Death and Deathlessness*.

The challenge that religion has had to face from its leading modern adversaries is boldly taken up and their charges are convincingly refuted by Dr. S. C. Chatterji, M.A., Ph.D., of the Calcutta University, in his stimulating contribution—*Can We Discard Religion?* . . .

Sri. C. T. K. Chari, M.A., writing with his scholarly and forceful pen, attempts to unfold the profound dialectical unity of all the



great mystical religions of the world through his distinctly original epistemological and ontological approach to the various issues relating to mysticism. Herein are presented the most apposite quotations from the great mystics of the East and the West—their observations, reflections, and meditations—all grouped round Sri Ramakrishna's teaching concerning God: '*Thy Name is Silence*'. The learned writer rightly holds and gives unmistakable indication of the view that Sri Ramakrishna is far greater than what the scholastic interpretation of any one religion, system, or 'ism' would make him and that he has transcended the dichotomy of so-called 'East' and 'West'. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

The Wanderer, an occasional contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*, left the shores of India in February last year and reached America, travelling *via* England. In this illustrated article, written in his remarkably lucid and fascinating style, he narrates the many interesting experiences of his travel *From the Old World to the New*. . . .

In *Science and Modern Education*, Prof. P. S. Naidu, M.A., of the Allahabad University, makes a critical estimate of the ideas and ideals of science teaching in modern secondary schools. With his long experience and vast scholarship in the methods of educational psychology, he has discussed the results of the impact of science and secularism on the plastic and fertile minds of young pupils, and has argued, with perfectly justifiable emphasis, that the non-aggressive and humble attitude, indicated by the *method* of science should be pressed into service to counteract the impulses of aggression and dominance generated by the mere *content* of science. . . .

Swami Lokeshwarananda gives a soul-entrancing account of the life and teachings of *Saint Namadeva*, one of the greatest mystics and poet-saints of Maharashtra. We are glad to inform our readers that the Swami will be contributing, in the following months, further articles dealing with some of the other great saints of Maharashtra. . . .

Māyā or superimposition of adjuncts on

Reality is what is commonly understood by *The Great Illusion*. But writing in brief, with this as title, Sri Manu Subedar focusses attention on an important theme which has a deep significance for social and national well-being. . . .

The art and science of correct living according to spiritual, moral, and physical principles is termed *Orthobiosis*—which is unequivocally explained by Swami Vimalananda. . . .

Writing with massive erudition and admirable clarity of expression, Srimat Anirvan, an old and valued contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*, makes a highly thought-provoking study of the philosophical and psychological implications of *The Spiritual Quest*. . . .

Swami Yatiswarananda shows the safest and best method that may be employed for *The Control of the Sub-conscious Mind* by emphasizing the need for systematic spiritual disciplines, which alone can put an end to all mental troubles—conscious and sub-conscious, and bestow on man everlasting peace and bliss. The article will be concluded in the next issue. . . .

In the *Yoga-Vāsishtha* we have one of the highest peaks of Hindu spiritual genius. The *Gita* stands supreme for all time as a world scripture. Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A., makes a comparative study of these two great philosophical treatises and shows that they both arrive at the same practical conclusion, viz., the ideal of perfect harmony between the life of contemplation and that of action. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

*A Saint and A Sinner*, by Swami Gambhirananda, is a biographical account, depicting the remarkable life of Surendra Nath Mitra, a beloved disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The 'Saint' is no other than Sri Ramakrishna, whose divine touch transformed the entire life of Surendra, the 'Sinner'. The concluding portion of the article will appear in the next issue. . . .

The teachings of Vedanta have attracted and influenced men and women, both young



and old, from every level of Western society. Attached to the Vedanta Society of Hollywood and situated about sixty miles south of it at Trabuco Canyon, the *Ramakrishna Monastery*—the first of its kind in America—was dedicated on the 7th September, 1949. On the 4th of July, 1951 was held a grand function of unusual significance at the Monastery—the dedication of the bronze portrait-statue of Swami Vivekananda. With all the verve and sublimity characteristic of her charming style, Sister Amiya gives a most impressive eye-witness account of the dedication ceremony, prefaced with a short description of the Monastery. Sister Amiya is an initiated Brahmachārini (nun) of the Ramakrishna Order, residing at the Sarada Convent at Santa Barbara which is also attached to and is situated some miles north of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood. The article is illustrated.

#### ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

In the death of Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, on the 5th December last at Calcutta, not only India but the world has lost a master artist of outstanding genius and exceptional ability. The loss is irreparable; it has removed the celebrated pioneer and pre-eminent leader from the field of modern Indian art. Lovers of art will specially mourn the passing of Dr. Tagore who not only initiated and led a new movement in Indian art but also exercised a powerful influence on the cultural development of modern India. The absence of the living touch and inspiration of his creative genius will be keenly felt in the realm of painting and sculpture, as also in that of Bengali literature wherein his contribution was a most distinguished one. Clearly he ranks among the makers of modern India and his magnificent efforts in the cause of her cultural renaissance has added to the prestige and stature of the nation in the eyes of the world. To the world of art, both Eastern and Western, he stands out as the bold and unique revealer and the able and learned expounder of the soul and inner spirit

of Indian aesthetic expression. To his numerous pupils and followers he was an inspirer and guide of unrivalled excellence, who opened their eyes to the rich and inexhaustible treasures of Indian art, without at the same time restricting their freedom or shutting out new rays of light from without. As an exponent of Indian art he stands apart by himself, distinctly original in many ways, and occupies a place of especial importance among his peers and equals in the hall of the great Immortals of history.

Abanindranath Tagore will long be remembered as the reawakener and reinterpreter of the art consciousness of his motherland. In originating a new school of national art, truly expressive of the ineffable and immortal spiritual genius of India, he courageously faced not a little ridicule and unhelpful criticism. But his genius and his independent efforts to revive the truly Indian traditions were greatly appreciated and encouraged by E. B. Havell and Sister Nivedita. Dr. Tagore met Nivedita more than once. He has paid glowing tributes to her and has expressed his great admiration and regard for her in his reminiscences. Nivedita, who was actively interested in the revival of Oriental art, highly praised Abanindranath's water-colours and did much to enable others to appreciate them by writing herself the finest appreciations of the artist's and his disciples' works. Referring to a profoundly symbolic work of Dr. Tagore, viz. 'Bhārata-Mātā', Nivedita wrote, 'It is the first great masterpiece in a new style. I would reprint it, if I could, by tens of thousands and scatter it broadcast over the land. Over and over again, as one looks into its qualities one is struck by the purity and delicacy of the personality portrayed'. Sri Ramananda Chatterji, the founder-editor of the *Modern Review*, records from personal knowledge and experience that Nivedita wrote out the finest of all appreciations of Abanindranath's works she ever did in praise of the artist's masterpiece—'The Passing of Shah Jehan'. Writing his reminiscences of Nivedita, Abanindranath Tagore says, 'Nivedita's presence had that



effect—ethereal, calm, and serene. And yet she emanated power. None more so. One felt it in her company and her talk refreshed your soul. She is indeed indescribable. I have not seen her second yet’.

The great, in some respects the greatest, Indian artist of this generation has passed from the world of mortals. But he lives for ever in his immortal creations of beauty and colour and in the ideas and ideals of artistic expression he exemplified. His devotion to art was a veritable adoration of the Divine and his creative self-expression sought to manifest the innate spiritual urge through truth, beauty, and goodness. His was a life of perfect simplicity, unbounded love, and unsophisticated magnanimity. He was not only a master artist but a master mind who ‘has earned for India the recognition of her contributory share in all that humanity has realized for itself’. His inner vision could not have failed to foresee the great future that awaits the palingenesis he strove to set in motion. India is once more awake, and is growing very much alive to the excellence and abundance of indigenous genius. As such there is bound to be much wider appreciation of the life and work of Abanindranath Tagore, and his patriotic fervour and national consciousness, which found expression even in his special field, will always be a source of perennial inspiration to all lovers of art.

### THE MODERN ILLS OF OLD INDIA

‘Give a dog a bad name, and then hang him.’ This is an old trick of the game of politics, and reporter and exdiplomat William Bullitt is an experienced hand at it. Now the dog to be hanged is Modern India, because India is not modern enough to understand and appreciate the disinterested and noble intentions of the U.S.A., the one mighty power that can save India from the impending doom of being engulfed in the rising sea of Communism in Asia. But under Nehru’s perverse leadership India is shutting her eyes to the truth as Bullitt sees it. Indo-China, Siam, Burma, Tibet—these countries are threatened by Communist domi-

nation, and India is militarily weak and ‘does not produce even a jeep’. ‘Under these circumstances it might be logical for India to enter into staff conversations with the British and ourselves and to attempt to make mutual defence arrangements. But at this point an irrational fear enters the picture and destroys logic.’—Thus writes diplomat Bullitt in an article, ‘The Old Ills of Modern India’ in *Life* of October 1, 1951. Mr. Bullitt psycho-analyses our fear complex thus: Nehru loved and feared his father, the strong Pandit Motilal Nehru, who once gave boy Nehru a tremendous thrashing. This father-fear complex Nehru transferred to the British whom he fought. The British left India. Then, to quote Mr. Bullitt, ‘The old fear and hatred of British power has been transferred in large measure to the power of the U.S. We are suspected of wanting to dominate all Asia, including India. Our superiority in weapons of war does not give Indians a warm feeling of security but the shivers. When we dropped the atomic bomb on Japan, the Indians imagined that some day it would be dropped on them. We are not trusted to make good use of our power. We are the terrible father in India’s national neurosis. The fear and envy of our power and material prosperity is translated by upper class Indians into a defence contempt for our “vulgarity” and our inability to rise to the heights of Indian “spirituality”!’

‘This is no joke. It is impossible to convince Indians that we are simply not interested in exploiting India. . . .’

Mr. Bullitt is worried that India, once the keystone of the great arch of British power that extended from South Africa to Singapore, is under the illusion that Communist Russia will not attack her, and that ‘Chinese Communists and Indian Socialism—the tiger and the lamb—will lie down together as friends in an Asiatic meadow of tranquillity’.

This sleep-destroying worry makes him ask, ‘What then should we do about India?’ and he goes on to suggest that there are sane forces in India which should be encouraged



to work to save India. 'The Sikhs, Rajputs, Mahrattas and Nepalese Gurkhas are among the finest fighting men in the world. There are men in Indian politics and administration who are conspicuous for common sense. They work manfully to make India a modern democracy. The problems of India are not insoluble. . . . Some financial aid from us would help'. The implications of these suggestions are obvious.

But Bullitt's brow-beating goes on in a new vein, a pious vein: 'If we meet misunderstanding with friendship, we shall strengthen those Indians who recognize that—whatever our faults—we are not predatory imperialists, and who sincerely desire to co-operate with us. And at least we shall help some suffering fellow-humans whose efforts to survive and to achieve a better life move the heart.' We say amen, to Bullitt's pious intentions.

Soon, however, these pious intentions give way to apocalyptical warnings. He says: 'If the government of India could shed its illusions now, it might yet save the independence of India and help to save the independence of all the peoples of the whole vast area by co-operation with them, the British, the French and ourselves in arrangement for mutual defence.

'We have been paying with our blood in Korea for our government's failure to foresee what would happen if we should allow China to fall into Communist hands. The people of India will pay not only with their blood but also with their freedom if their government cannot foresee the consequence of its present policies. In world affairs charm is no substitute for foresight. The epitaphs of nations can often be written in the words: Too late.'

And in order to support his none too covert suggestions to rally India on the side of the anti-Communist block, Mr. Bullitt has blackened the pages of *Life* with all the dirt he could gather from the political, economic, social and religious life in India. The object is obviously twofold: To make out a case for foreign benevolent political and mission-

ary intervention in guiding India from her benighted position to the land of Paradise that Mr. Bullitt envisages for us under his guidance, and to undermine India's unity and morale by dwelling upon her black spots. The same old arguments trotted out by the British for their domination of India are all there: the fabulously rich maharajas and the naked poor, the black goddess with a string of severed heads around her neck, sacred cows, sacred monkeys, 90 per cent illiteracy, unimaginable poverty and famine, 330,000,003 Hindu gods (the number ought to be one greater, for Bullitt has forgotten to mention Christ, whom also some Hindus worship as a god), the numerous languages and dialects, and the castes and sub-castes and outcastes, and 40 million Moslems, whom Bullitt delights in exciting against the Hindus.

But in spite of all Bullitt's propaganda bullets, Indians will not cease to regard America as the land of liberty. Truly did the Swami Vivekananda say of America: 'Hail, Columbia, motherland of liberty! It has been given to thee who never dipped her hand in her neighbour's blood, who never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by robbing one's neighbours, it has been given to thee to march at the vanguard of civilization with the flag of harmony.' Bullitt also believes in this destiny of the U. S. A., but he is working against himself by the kind of propaganda bullets which he has been using in this article. It is not by a contemptuous ignorance of the ways of other peoples, or by malicious twistings and interpretations of their customs and beliefs that understanding and harmony are achieved. The *tu quoque* argument is an easy one, but as it does not promote goodwill and harmony, we refrain from it. But to people who are likely to take at their face value the grotesque propaganda of Mr. Bullitt, we would offer a few lines in correction of his misrepresentations.

The monkey's life is sacred, but not the monkey. The genius of India has always been to preserve and not to destroy. The



monkey, even though sub-human, has been preserved from extermination because of this idea. The various backward races in India have not been exterminated, but were allowed to live and develop in their own way. Otherwise India would not be the ethnological museum that it is for anthropologists.

The same principle underlies the apparently bewildering variety of social divisions into castes and the innumerable 'idols' of God that are worshipped throughout the land. It is this same principle of human love and sympathy that makes India accommodate Moham-medanism and its older sister Christianity. To quote the inimitable words of Swami Vivekananda: 'The object of the peoples of Europe is to exterminate all, in order to live themselves. The aim of the Aryans is to raise all up to their own level, nay, even to a higher level than themselves. The means of European civilization is the sword; of the Aryans, the division into different Varnas. The system of division into different Varnas is the stepping stone to civilization, making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. In Europe, it is everywhere victory to the strong and death to the weak. In the land of Bharata, every social rule is for the protection of the weak.'

Bullitt's cheap gibes at the worship of Kali, the Divine Mother, and the Shivalinga are all in line with his intention to decry India in the eyes of the world. His Christian training has taught him only the Fatherhood of God and the conception of the Motherhood of God seems to him bizarre. But as Sri Ramakrishna said, Kali is the pure Brahman of the Upanishads, the same as the Father in Heaven of the Christians, the same God that is conceived in different forms by followers of different religions. The masses of India do not worship idols as such but representations of God, to Whom they pray. Is the Cross a mere idol of wood or metal for the Christian who knows what it stands for? And yet how many among the masses of Christians hold these very idols as objects of reverence! Again the origin and significance of the Shivalinga

is anything but what ignorant critics understand of them. Swami Vivekananda has exposed the hollowness of such ridiculous explanations about the Shivalinga put forward by Mr. Gustav Oppert, a German scholar, at the Paris Congress of the History of Religions in 1900. To quote the Swami: 'The worship of the Shivalinga originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva Veda in praise of the Yupa Stambha, the sacrificial post. In that hymn a description is found of the beginningless and endless Stambha or Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of the eternal Brahman. As, afterwards the Yajna (sacrificial) fire, its smoke, and ashes and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox that used to carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifices—gave place to the conceptions of the brightness of Shiva's body, his tawny matted hair, his blue throat, and the riding of the bull of Shiva and so on: Just so, the Yupa Skambha gave place in time to the Shivalinga, and was deified to the highest Devahood of Sri Sankara. In the Atharva Veda Samhita the sacrificial cakes are also extolled along with the attributes of Brahman.'

'In the Linga Purana, the same hymn is expanded in the shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha and the superiority of Mahadeva.

'The explanation of the Shivalinga as a phallic emblem was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of Buddhism.'

It is the height of malevolent perversity to connect the worship of the Shivalinga with the question of overpopulation in India as Mr. Bullitt does when he writes: 'In desperation advocates of birth control have now started a movement for the sterilization of the male! (*A pure concoction from Mr. Bullitt's fevered brain*). That proposal is not likely to go far. A majority of both Moslems and Hindus oppose birth control of any kind.

<sup>1</sup> Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV, p. 358 ff.



Indeed, the most widespread object of worship among the Hindus is the male organ of generation: the "Lingam", the fetish of the god Shiva whose shrines are to be found in almost every town and village. What then is the Government of India doing to solve the problem of increasing the food supply faster than the population increases? It spends the little it has to spend on inadequate irrigation schemes. But at the same time the President of the Republic of India goes to Somnath and, in a splendidly reconstructed Siva Temple, dedicates for worship a black stone "Lingam" eight and a half feet long. He did that on May 11, 1951. It was no secret ceremony. Nearly 100,000 persons were present. And the newspapers used frontpage headlines to

report: President Prasad installs Somnath Idol.'

Mr. Bullitt's article is replete with such perverted propaganda. We in India are not unaware of the grave problems facing us in modern times. Illiteracy, poverty, and industrial backwardness, and military weakness are there. But these are the legacies of the slavery under the British rule. Nor does there seem to be any great chance that America or Great Britain, Russia, or China, or any other power is likely to disinterestedly help us on the road to strength and prosperity. There are dangers all around us, and of these the bullying propaganda of Mr. Bullitt is not the least of the modern ills that this old land has to face.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA. BY ADOLF KAEGI. (TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN BY R. ARROWSMITH). Published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., 35, Central Avenue, Calcutta. Pages 120.

What strikes an intelligent reader of the book under review is that the translator seems to have made too much of his duty to be true and faithful to the author. Surely, in rendering the author's writing in a different language, it is the translator's work to represent it fully and faithfully. But that should not mean that the translator's writing should be cramped and jerky. It should rather appear as his own,—both expressive and easy-flowing. Another important qualification of a translator is that he should be possessed of a good background of the subject in which he undertakes a translation. In translating a book like the above, that qualification is all the more important, because there may be several points which may require a fuller elucidation and a clearer presentation than the author has given.

The author, a German, has started his work with enthusiasm and even with an appreciative outlook, though that outlook, quite naturally, gets somewhat misty at times. Naturally, because, to a Westerner having developed a different outlook

on, particularly, the subtler things of perception, several things and doings in the East might well appear strange. Referring to the custom of *suttee*, the genesis of which has not been well understood by European critics, he observes: 'Such features might easily modify our general verdict regarding the stage of morality and culture of the Vedic Aryans; but we must not forget that people in a condition of Nature are not sentimental as today peasants are not; and that the death of a relative, or the thought of their own, leaves them indifferent'. Here, besides the common European bias which he has shown, he has also displayed an inability to well appreciate the feelings and sentimentalism which inspired the Vedic hymns. Does the Vedic literature really show that the people in that age were not sentimentally developed? And where does it show that they were indifferent to the death of a relative? Did not Shiva, forgetting himself, forgetting everything, carry the body of Sati all over the world?

One refreshing thing about the book is, however, the earnestness of the author to study and understand a hoary living culture, the background of which has yet hardly been found and even the vital links of which to the world context are



mostly missing. Through the hymns of the *Rg-Veda* he has diligently sought to get the picture of the men and things at the time, and the results of his study he has classified under interesting heads. But, perhaps, one, reading the book without reference to complementary or explanatory literature, will get away with an incomplete idea of the Vedic period. It will be worse if the idea formed be distorted and prejudiced, as it can be, when reading the strong bias which the author has shown against the *Brāhmaṇas*. Whatever be the merits of the *Brahmaṇas*, to start studying them with the notion that they are 'products of priestly knowledge and perverted imagination' is to do that 'grand division of Vedic literature', as he himself calls it, great injustice.

As regards the interpretation of the Vedic literature, which is the most important thing in its study, the author has quoted European scholars to the effect that 'through the confusion with which it seeks to comprehend from its own religious standpoint, so many centuries later, the ancient conditions and conceptions completely foreign to it, the Indian interpretation comes to be false throughout its whole spirit; while we, through our knowledge drawn from analogous conditions, of the life, conceptions, and needs of ancient peoples, and of popular poetry, are better equipped for an understanding of the whole', though he adds, 'but no one disputes that we have not yet by far reached the foundation' of Vedic exegesis.

There is point in that; but at the same time the disadvantages of an altogether different foreign outlook in an understanding study of an ancient religious literature, inspired by deep feelings, must be recognized too. There is an important difference between the critical and analytical study and the understanding of an ancient and a foreign literature. It is the right understanding which should precede the analysis for a correct and true comprehension of the background, the implications, the values and significances of an age, that is deeply buried in the past. It is in this comprehensive understanding that those who have still traditional links with the past have an advantage over the stranger analysts. But it is most unfortunate and regrettable that many educated Indians show and take little interest in the glorious ancient culture of their own, a culture which has drawn and draws even now the admiring interest of foreign intellectuals. And when and where the former turn to the subject, some of them often show a worse understanding than the latter, because they approach with a stronger prejudice than even the foreigners. It is a pity that many of our universities and other educational institutions are taking little interest in this respect and are producing no works of true

merit on ancient Indian culture and history. The earnestness which the present author shows throughout in picturing the state of things in the Vedic age should give incentive to Indian scholars who should, however, have an open mind, uninfluenced by foreign writers. The general supposition of the latter that the *Rg-Vedic* Age was somewhere about 1500 B.C., and that Indian civilization and culture had its dawn then has discouraged exploration of the Age beyond that date and has left the true picture of Indian civilization and culture obscure, unconnected, and incomplete at several places. It is here that interested students of Indian culture have a wide and inspiring field of work.

J. M. GANGULI

MAHATMA (LIFE OF M. K. GANDHI) (VOL. I). BY D. G. TENDULKAR. *Distributors: Publications Department, The Times of India Press, Fort, Bombay 1. Pages 438. Price Rs. 25.*

Since the publication of his Autobiography years ago, many biographical accounts on Mahatma Gandhi, both big and small, by various writers, have been published from time to time; but none that promises to be so very authentic and exhaustive as the present massive biographical work, in eight volumes, undertaken by Sri D. G. Tendulkar and his colleagues. The book under review is the first volume of the series, covering the first fifty-one years of Gandhiji's illustrious life—from his birth (1869) up to the end of the year 1920.

The volume opens with a superbly written historical survey, affording a conspectus of the march of events within the Indian sub-continent, commencing from the Battle of Plassey (1757) and ending with the atrocious massacre at Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar) (1919) and the Khilafat agitation and the death of Tilak (1920). It serves as a helpful synoptic introduction to the chapters on Gandhiji's life that are included in this volume. Here are illuminating chapters on the memorable early years of Gandhiji, on his student days in London, on his progress from a barrister in South Africa to his position as the great author and initiator of the technique of Satyagraha, on his close epistolary acquaintance with that 'kindred soul of Yasnaya Polyana—Tolstoy, on the epic struggle in South Africa, on his active entry into the field of Indian politics, on the soul-stirring events that are associated with such historic names as Champaran and Jallianwalla Bagh, and on the gradual emergence of Gandhiji as an outstanding personality and a powerful force in Indian politics. Written with stupendous erudition and in the author's forceful and crystal-clear style, the contents of these chapters that tell the story of Gandhiji's experiments with



truth have been worked out with great labour and much effort.

Gandhiji's name is a household word in India, and the story of his life and work is more or less widely known all the world over. As such, the need for and the value of the present biography is all the greater as it helps to serve as a thoroughly sifted and well documented standard record, indispensable to the historian and the research scholar as well as to the ardent and intelligent reader. Rightly has Jawaharlal Nehru said, in his Foreword to the volume under review, 'I consider this book to be of great value as a record not only of the life of a man supreme in his generation, but also of a period of India's history which has intrinsic importance of its own'.

The author says in his Introduction, 'The present work is a simple narration of the events through which we have lived. It is a history of the last fifty years or so, with Gandhiji in the foreground. To make the work authentic and detailed, the author has not only devoted years of sincere labour but has consulted and discussed the smallest details with Gandhiji himself almost up to the last few days before he passed away. Gandhiji too had evinced keen interest in the publication of this work.'

In completing the eight volumes of the present biographical work, the author has done well by exercising his originality and independence in dealing with the subject-matter and in arranging and interpreting the text and the structure of events. While making references to contemporary personalities, institutions, and events in the social, religious and other fields of national life, he has displayed a sound sense of fair discrimination and impartial judgment. This is an important factor which many a biographer fails to keep in view.

The volume is profusely illustrated with rare photographs and numerous letters are reproduced in facsimile. To make one's journey through its pages is like a fascinating and thrilling exploration. The author and the publishers have laid the English-reading public under a deep debt of gratitude by the production of this volume. We gladly look forward to the early publication of the succeeding volumes.

**PRE-ASHOKAN BRAHMI.** By A. B. WALAWALKER. Published by Muni Bros., 13, Burrows Lane, Bombay 2. Pages 44. Price Rs. 2-8.

Sri A. B. Walawalker had submitted a Paper to the Fifteenth Oriental Conference held at Bombay in 1949 on the origin of the Brāhmi script. This has now been brought out in book form. The author's research into and close analysis of the

Ashokan Brahmi and his study of the various forms of scripts prevalent in different parts of India (which were supposed to be different forms of Brahmi) led him to the conclusion that there was an original phonographic script from which the Ashokan Brahmi as well as other allied forms of scripts in India were derived. The alphabetical arrangement in the pre-Pāṇinian 'Māheshvari Sutras', quoted and made famous by Panini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, which is different from the Paninian 'Varṇamālā' order gave the author the clue that this different latter order must have been intended to group together letters constituted in similar style in order to facilitate the learning of the alphabet. Sri Walawalker has reconstructed the alphabet of the 'Maheshvari' Lipi from epigraphic evidences and shown that it was strictly phonetic, systematic, and was constructed scientifically out of basic 'crescent' strokes joined in different 'geometrical patterns'. He holds the view that it is the parent of the Brahmi as well as of many of the other Indian and non-Indian scripts, and that they may also yield a clue to decipher other yet undeciphered scripts. He has thus set aside the disputed theory of many a Western scholar that the Brahmi was of foreign origin, probably Phœnician, and that India had no writing before the time of Ashoka and that even the word for 'writing' was borrowed. Whatever the justification for these views, many recent finds of Pre-Ashokan writings have definitely tilted the scales in favour of the indigenous origin of the Brahmi and other Indian alphabets, and even a strong case is made out for the theory that some of the scripts of Western Asia were themselves derived from the Indian alphabet. Sri L. S. Wakanker, who has written a learned Introduction to the book under review and has given, in an Appendix, numerous references to 'writing' in Indian literature, from the *R̥g-Veda* downwards, has shown in an article in the *United Asia* (Vol. III, No. 4) that the Nebetean script, which is considered to be the parent of the modern Arabic and cognate scripts, was borrowed and adapted from the Brahmi. This view is also held by some Muslim scholars like Dr. Mahdi-Hassan. The recent finds in different parts of South India, dating back to 3000 B.C., bear writings similar to the Brahmi and strengthen the view that the Brahmi is of Indian origin.

The author's main contribution here is the reconstruction of the Maheshvari alphabet. But it still needs to be tested and corroborated by other definite evidences. The presentation of the subject, in greater detail, with references to original sources where necessary, will be welcomed by scholars interested in the subject.



EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT HINDUS. BY DR. DEBENDRA CHANDRA DAS GUPTA. *Published by the University of Calcutta, Senate House, Calcutta. Pages 252. Price Rs. 8.*

There is a queer notion that Ancient Hindus were ignorant of science, and were strangers to the scientific outlook on life. Since the publication of Dr. Brajendranath Seal's *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, this false notion has lost ground. And, in the field of psychology, our ancients had wonderful insight into the workings of the human mind. In fact, they went beyond the mind to the true Self and soul of man. Recent publications in Alamkāra literature, such as Dr. Sankaran's *Rasa and Dhvani* and Dr. De's *Sanskrit Poetics*, and articles and papers on aesthetics in the Nāṭya and Shilpa Shāstras, and above all Swami Akhilananda's *Hindu Psychology*, have served to bring to light the psychological lore hidden in Ancient Hindu literature. And now comes Dr. D. C. Das Gupta with his valuable source book in Ancient Hindu Educational Psychology.

In the present crisis in Indian education, there is a tendency to throw overboard everything Indian, as being 'ancient, authoritarian, and reactionary',—in fact, to throw the baby out with the bath-water

—and to seek for light in the false horizons of the 'West' and the 'North'. That way lies disaster. We have to build on the firm foundations laid by our seers and prophets. And Dr. Das Gupta has rendered valuable service to the cause of Indian education by drawing attention to what is of abiding value in Ancient Hindu Psychology. But Dr. Das Gupta's book is more a 'source book' of literary sources where psychological principles may be found. It serves as a guide to the spot where excavations will ultimately bring up priceless treasures. It does not tell us what the treasures are. The book is not on Educational Psychology, but on the sources for discovering Educational Psychology.

Again, Ancient Hindu Educational Psychology steadily pressed on to the great goal of Self-realization. The teacher and the taught together laboured for the full and final development of the Self. This supremely important aim of education has not been given the prominence it deserves, in the book under review. Even so, it is a very valuable book and should be read by the students and teachers of training colleges, by research workers in education, and, above all, by those who talk glibly about revolutionizing Indian education.

P. S. NAIDU

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI JAGADANANDAJI

We are sorry to announce the passing away of Srimat Swami Jagadanandaji Maharaj on 4th December 1951 in Brindavan at the age of 72. He had come to Brindavan in November 1951 for change and rest, but he had a sudden attack of coronary thrombosis to which he succumbed.

The Swami joined the Order in April 1916 at the Belur Math and had the blessed privilege of being initiated by the Holy Mother. In 1920 he was initiated into Sannyasa by Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj. He was of an ascetic and contemplative temperament from the very beginning. He had a firm faith in the Advaitic ideal of Shankara and had a great mastery of Shankara's classical commentaries on the Upanishads, Gita, Brahma Sutras etc. His translations into English of Shankara's *Upadeśasāhasri*, *Vākyaवृत्ति*, and *Atmajñānopadeśavidhi* have been published in book form.

Though imbued with the Advaitic ideal, the Swami was at the same time a great devotee. He

used to say that the followers of Sri Ramakrishna are not merely Jnanis, but Vijnanis, combining the highest ideals of Jnana and Bhakti.

Though the Swami did not engage himself in active work in any centre, yet his spiritual life was a source of inspiration to one and all. He spent most of his time in various centres of the Ramakrishna Mission, taking classes on the Shastras for the benefit of the younger members of the Order, and in exhorting them to live up to the lofty ideals set before them by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. His high spiritual qualities made many consider him a Jivanmukta.

May his soul rest for ever in the regions of Eternal Blessedness!

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN, CALCUTTA

#### REPORT FOR 1950

This institution, situated at 99, Lansdowne Road, Calcutta-26, is a Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre. The following is an abstract of its commendable work during 1950:



**Antenatal Care:** The most important activity of the Shishumangal Pratishtan for the last nineteen years has been the rendering of antenatal care to thousands of expectant mothers on the principle, 'prevention of disease is better than its cure'. The outdoor antenatal clinic of the institution was kept open from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. daily except on Fridays. Serious antenatal cases were admitted to the indoor hospital for treatment and necessary care. The outdoor clinic treated 6,096 new cases and 8,505 old cases during the year. In the indoor section 437 new cases were admitted, and the total of beds daily occupied was 4,219.

**Hospital Confinement:** There were 100 beds in the hospital of which 38 were in the General Wards (Free), 38 in the Paying Wards, and 24 in the Cabins. Poor and deserving cases were admitted to the hospital and treated with care, free of charge. The total number of 'delivery' cases was 3,919 and the total of beds daily occupied by mothers was 26,164 and that by babies was 21,105. The percentage of free patients admitted was 54.5.

**Treatment of Gynaecological Cases:** In the outdoor section 2,012 new cases and 4,444 old cases were treated. In the indoor, the number of new cases admitted was 267 and the total of beds daily occupied was 2,225.

**Postnatal Care and Follow-up of Children:** Clinics were held on Tuesdays every week from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., by an experienced Paediatrician, when the infants were weighed and examined, and the mothers were instructed about proper feeding, rest, etc. of their babies. The total number of 'visits' to the clinics was 1,531 ('first visits' 824).

**Laboratory:** 16,307 pathological examinations of blood, urine, sputum, etc. were conducted by the laboratory during the year.

**Training of Midwives and Dhātris:** Five Senior and nine Junior midwives and four Dhātris passed in the respective examinations during the year.

**New Additions and Needs:** New Wards were opened in the second and third floors on the extended hospital, in December 1950, thus bringing the total number of beds to 150, of which 48 were free. Free beds may be endowed at Rs. 5,000 per bed. The sacred memory of near and dear ones may be perpetuated by donating for the cost of construction of any of the following items: (1) A Cabin—Rs. 4,000; (2) A Labour Room or an Operation Theatre—Rs. 8,000; (3) A Ward of 6 beds—Rs. 10,000; (4) A Ward of 12 beds—Rs. 20,000; (5) A Hospital Lift—Rs. 25,000. Donations and

endowments will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary of the institution.

RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA,  
SHYAMALA TAL

REPORT FOR 1950

Nestled in the interior of the Himalayas, in sylvan surroundings, about eleven miles from Tanakpur, the Sevashrama has been doing useful service for the last thirty-six years. The Sevashrama, with its 12 beds, has been a very useful source of medical relief to the hill-people over a range of thirty miles. The hospital being located near the trade-route between Tibet and the plains, many traders and travellers falling ill in the jungles *en route* and at Tanakpur come here for treatment. Sometimes the present accommodation for 12 indoor patients proves very inadequate and arrangements have to be made for extra beds on the floor causing much inconvenience to the patients. A distinctive feature of the Sevashrama is the treatment given to domestic animals in its Veterinary Department.

The total number of cases treated in the indoor department was 137 and in the outdoor 7,303 of which 5,392 were new cases. Of the 5,529 patients treated, 3,774 belonged to Almora, 915 to Nainital, 383 to Garhwal, 137 to Nepal, and 320 to other places. About 40 different kinds of diseases were treated and 68 minor operations were performed.

In the Veterinary Department, 11 animals were treated in the indoor section, and 1,195 in the outdoor section of which 1,080 were new cases.

**Needs:** It is imperative that at least four more beds for indoor patients and an up to date Operation Theatre are added to the hospital. Besides this the Sevashrama needs:

Permanent Fund for the maintenance

of the hospital	...	...	Rs. 1,00,000
Building Fund	...	...	" 30,000
Equipment and Appliances Fund	...	...	" 25,000
Endowment for 4 additional beds	...	...	" 12,000

The Veterinary Department also needs a Permanent Fund, for its proper upkeep, to the tune of Rs. 50,000.

Beds may be endowed in memory of near and dear ones. The cost of endowing a bed is Rs. 3,000.

All contributions will be received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal, P.O. Sukhidhang, Dt. Almora, U.P.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls on 19th January, 1952.





THE HOLY MOTHER



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Giving but flowers to You is not enough  
Though I should cull them wide and heap them high;  
For blossoms limit gifts to grosser stuff  
When at Your feet my very soul should lie  
Flower-like in adoration! This alone  
O blessed Lord, is worthy to be laid  
Upon Your altar, who sought out Your own  
Across the world through tears and night, who made  
A pathway to my heart, whose love could burn  
The barriers of miles, of tongue and race.  
O Lord, O gentle One, guide me to turn  
Wholly to You, giving no darkness place  
Within my being, yielding all its room  
For the full splendour of Your love to bloom.

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# LETTERS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

## I

*To Swami Akhandananda*

Darjeeling

26-4-97

My dear Gangadhar,

We learn from Baburam's<sup>1</sup> letter that you are still abroad. Noren<sup>2</sup> asks you to return to the Math<sup>3</sup> without delay, as he has something to say to you. He is doing better. We leave this for Calcutta day after tomorrow. After staying at Calcutta for a short time, Noren starts for Almora to live there for a month. He has left the idea of going to England for the present. He is going to start a Bengali magazine<sup>4</sup> from the Math very soon. However, I hope you will not fail to comply with his request, and trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing you soon after we reach Calcutta.

Hoping this will find you all right,

Yours affectionately,

BRAHMANANDA

## II

*To the same*

Math,

Alambazar

5 July, '97

My dear Akhandanandaji,

Today I send you a remittance. . . .

I have something to suggest regarding your work<sup>5</sup> there:

1. When the Government is no more willing to supply you with rice at that price, it is necessary for you to control distribution as well as to be very discreet.

2. Those alone who are really needy and quite incapable of earning a livelihood are to be enlisted for having the alms.

3. You will enlist only such people as you will think really deserve the charity, and will not be guided by any other people either in private charity or in public.

<sup>1</sup> Swami Premananda.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>3</sup> Alambazar Math.

<sup>4</sup> *Udbodhan*.

<sup>5</sup> Famine Relief work at Murshidabad.



We learn that a wine-seller and a barber . . . are receiving seven seers of rice daily. These people are able-bodied and earn their bread by labour. If so, you will inquire about them and let us know on what consideration they are receiving the alms.

You proposed to open a relief camp in another place. Let us know what you have done to start it. There is some likelihood of our sending men to open Relief Work in Jessore within the next week.

You will be glad to learn that we have collected cloths, old and new. . . . We are sure you will have much pleasure in distributing these cloths amongst your people. Let us have by return of post some particulars of the place to which we shall send the cloths. . . .

With love and Namaskar,

Yours affectionately,

BRAHMANANDA

### III

Alambazar Math

27-II-97

My dear Brother,

I am very sorry that owing to some reasons I could not report to you timely, and I hope you will excuse me for this. Last week I came to the Math, and I thought of writing to you. But the next day I was summoned to Calcutta at once by Swami Turiyananda, as Gopal's Mother<sup>6</sup> was seriously ill and was in a precarious condition. So I went to Calcutta with some of my brothers here. But by the blessings of our almighty Lord she is better now. . . .

How are you doing now? . . . What news of your beloved Collector? Has he promised you the land for the orphanage? Swamiji<sup>7</sup> has done splendid work at Lahore. He delivered there three beautiful lectures, and the educated public of other sects also were highly pleased with his charming oratory. . . . I shall try to send extracts from his lectures, which are published in the local *Tribune*. . . . Swamiji and party left Lahore for Delhi, where he reached safely. There also he delivered three lectures. Perhaps you have heard that Mr. Sevier<sup>8</sup> is going to build a Math there. The site has not been selected still. . . .

Dear Brother, we are very much satisfied with the noble and exemplary work which you have undertaken to perform. . . .

With love and Namaskar,

Yours affectionately,

S. BRAHMANANDA

<sup>6</sup> Aghoremani Devi, a well-known woman devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>7</sup> Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>8</sup> A leading English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who later helped to establish the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

BY THE EDITOR

'This is the Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world: "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good".'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

We are living in an age when religious superstitions are beginning to be challenged and exposed by scientific investigations and conclusions. It is self-evident that man has been growing more and more suspicious of God, the soul, and everything that lies beyond the ken of the physical senses. The fascination of wealth and material resources that the civilization of the West brought in its wake has bewildered individuals and groups of every land and has made them cling desperately to the comforts of the body and the pleasures of the senses. If there is one word that characterizes the trend and theme of modern life, it is the word 'scientific', which has somehow acquired a much wider significance than is called for, not excluding competition, exploitation, arrogance, and selfishness. There is an open crusade against religion in many parts of the world. And when this sad spectacle assumes a poignantly alarming proportion, it is not unnatural for thinking people to ask, 'Has the world grown irreligious? Where is the world drifting to? What is in store for humanity if things go on in this way?' And the answers are not far to seek.

The scriptures and the prophets of humanity have invariably declared that man is divine, is essentially a spiritual being, and that the purpose and goal of life is to strive for and realize in full this divinity of the Self. This one great spiritual ideal of man has been realized through various paths and interpreted in a variety of ways. 'Truth is one; sages call it by various names'—says the *Rg-Veda*.

'Now of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons,' says St. Peter, 'But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted by Him.' In the *Koran* too it has been said, 'Our God and your God are one God and after him we all strive' (*Sura* 29, verse 45). 'There is one supreme God . . .', wrote Maximus, in the fourth century, 'who is, as it were, the God and mighty Father of all. The powers of the Deity, diffused through the universe which he has made, we worship under many names, as we are all ignorant of His true name'. Thus it cannot but be clear to discerning minds that the Brahman of the Vedantins, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, the Allah of the Muslims, the Jehova of the Jews, the Buddha and the Dharma of the Buddhists, and the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians are manifestations under different names of one and the same Eternal Principle. It is the same spiritual light coming through glasses of different colours, the variations being necessary for purposes of adaptation according to the needs of the individual and the age. But in the heart of every religion, every faith, the same Truth reigns, even as the thread through a string of pearls.

From the beginning of time, the spiritual yearnings of the soul of man have sought vivid and eloquent fulfilment in the inspired outpourings and dynamic teachings of the great seers and saints—the living representations of the divinity and perfection that are inherent in each and every man. It is more



than a truism to say that the future is always the fulfilment of the past and that with the hour and its urgent need appears the prophet or saint—in other words, the Avatāra or God incarnate—with superhuman vision and extraordinary personality, in order to lead mankind along the path of righteousness. Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak, and all the other spiritual teachers of the world, appearing in different ages of human history represent, in their several ways, the one eternal Truth, at the same time reinvigorating and reinterpreting the perennial ideals and values of civilization at its highest and best. It is no doubt a common phenomenon in the history of religious progress in the world that the divine message of God-men, so very indispensable to afflicted humanity is often treated with indifference, if not hostility, before it is truly understood and ardently accepted. It cannot also be denied that with the passing of time the teachings of these great Incarnations appear to grow less effective and seem to exert not so powerful an influence on the people of succeeding generations. Hence the need for the appearance of such God-men in every age and in every land in order to effect a fresh spiritual renaissance and save men from the dangers consequent on a periodical spiritual crisis overtaking society. A revival of true religion, in its broadest and most intense sense, is necessary if the clouds of gathering non-spiritual forces are to be dispersed and if man is to be prevented from becoming a helpless victim of tensions and temptations, internal and external, that make him forget his divine nature.

At a time when Hinduism needed a secure shelter where it could hold its own against the onslaughts of materialistic forces from beyond the seas, and when the world needed a bold faith that had no fear of truth, Sri Ramakrishna was born on the soil of India 'where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence'. In his wonderful life of just fifty years he showed the world what religion truly and essentially is and

thereby put in motion a process of mighty spiritual renaissance. To him religion meant no empty name, forgotten ritual, or blind faith. In him the world, vacillating between rank atheism and fanatical dogmatism, found at last the refreshing sheet-anchor of real religion in practice. He appeared before the somewhat bewildered Hindu society of the middle of the last century, at a time when reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India. To a sceptical age of unbelief and superstition Sri Ramakrishna gave a message of compelling and rationally sound significance—a message never before proclaimed in such ringing tones in any other age. For him there existed only Humanity and Truth. He was, according to many, not only the embodiment and representation of all past Incarnations but also 'the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people'. Today Sri Ramakrishna's name is a household word in India and many other parts of the world, and his soul animates the spiritual life of every nation in a more or less degree.

It is to his realizations that one should turn in order to comprehend and profit by the spiritual guidance he offers in such unparalleled manner. Although he could read or write but little, he could expound with ease and unambiguity the essential truths contained in the scriptures and philosophies of the world. By no means a 'scientist' in the usual sense of the word, he is greater than the greatest scientists of the world in his quest after and realization of Truth and Reality. Among conflicting creeds and faiths he discovered the essential unity of spirituality which alone, in fact, constituted real religion. His universality was no sort of dry and intellectually conceived international humanism. In the words of Romain Rolland, Sri Ramakrishna represents a new message of the soul, a great symphony that is built up of a hundred different musical elements emanating from the past. There is practically no religion he did not live, no truth he did not realize, and no fact of religious experience he did not test.



A new world of spiritual significance, not in the least contradicting the core of any other faith, was revealed to him by the attainments he reached through every form of religious practice. He was exclusively neither a dualist nor a monist, neither a Shākta nor a Vaishnava, yet he was all these and much more.

'As many faiths so many paths' (*yata mata tata patha*) forms the leit-motif of the grand spiritual renaissance wrought by Sri Ramakrishna. 'Various are the paths', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'that lead to the Ocean of Immortality. Life is blessed, no matter by whatever means you get into it. . . . Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God. . . . Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God'. He called a truce to all fights and dissensions among the followers of different religions by clearly pointing out to them the utter folly of claiming one's own way as the *only* true way to the House of God. To narrow-minded bigots and fanatics Sri Ramakrishna says, 'Be not like frogs in the well. It knows nothing bigger and grander than its well. So are all bigots, they do not see anything better than their own creeds'. His practice, in his own life, of the different religions with equal veneration and strictly in accordance with their methods, even to the minutest detail, and the realization of the same ultimate Reality through each one of them forms one of the most glorious and unprecedentedly significant chapters of human history. By discovering and proclaiming to one and all the greatest common factor of the religions of the world, himself remaining an orthodox follower of Hinduism, Sri Ramakrishna originated the mighty spiritual force and religious synthesis that India, in particular, needed most. His advent marks the beginning of a religious and moral revival, a spiritual renaissance, stripping religious emotion of all corruptions and priestcraft and convincing scientific-minded moderns of the tangible reality of the Spirit in man.

His passionate yearning from childhood

for God made him enter a powerful protest, all through, against superstition and narrowness of all kinds. Sri Ramakrishna therefore urged that to realize God an aspirant must stick to his own faith, but at the same time look upon all other faiths as so many paths, all equally good in themselves. He insisted that true devotees of God, to whichever religion they may belong, should possess in common a deep-seated loyalty to their own ideal, absolute sincerity, a spirit of love and brotherhood, and resolute determination to go Godward by renouncing the natural subservience to lust and greed. Sri Ramakrishna's legacy to the world is this unique catholicity in religion, this emphasis on the spiritual more than on the material or secular aspect of life. To him realization of God was the essential thing in life.

Everything else—money, comforts, pleasures, and other secular pursuits—come next. He wanted that a Hindu should strive to be a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, and a Muslim a better Muslim. They can thereby make themselves worthy citizens and be the parents of worthy children possessing noble qualities befitting them for the task of self-improvement and the regeneration of the nation. That was why in all his teachings he never failed to lay stress on the Vedantic truth that man is Narayana Himself and that love and reverence for the human personality should proceed from a realization of the divinity of man and the oneness of existence. Sri Ramakrishna's life is a definite affirmation that such realization is possible, here and now, for every earnest and sincerely striving aspirant. To quote his words: 'When one is sincere he can realize the Lord through whatsoever path he proceeds. God is infinite; so are the paths leading to Him'.

The fundamental synthesis of Indian thought and the essential spiritual unity of the religions of the world, so palpably demonstrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna have a lofty significance much greater than can at present be imagined and far beyond the times we are living in. There was not in him the



slightest touch of any claim to spiritual leadership or anything 'mysterious' or 'occult' as is common in the case of lesser minds with more material ambitions. His life was like an unsheathed sword—shining and unhidden, and ever on the surface for man to observe, investigate, and then accept. He made no secret of the fact that everyone who sincerely and correctly followed the path to perfection is bound to succeed in attaining the goal, irrespective of the path itself. His spiritual experiences have inspired a new current of thought and activity, embracing every part of the world and every phase of life. There is no *real* difference between 'sacred' and 'secular' to a man whose life is dedicated to the realization of God. Work is worship; to love is to serve; service of man is worship of God. A new type of humanity, having higher ideals and aspirations, is in the process of coming to its own in every country. A great spiritual renaissance alone can help this new type of humanity to stem the tide of Godless materialism and degrading hedonism which are the cause of the prevailing political, economic, and social unrest.

Sri Ramakrishna speaks to the modern man in a language more easily understandable than hitherto and in a more direct manner than ever before. It is the most authoritative testament of man's divine essence and man's approach to God, in our own times. He has made it clear beyond dispute that the scienti-

fic temper and rationalistic spirit are not opposed to religion and revelation. This leads directly to the establishment of harmony between religion and science, between the great ideals that dominate men's minds in the two parts of the world that are often designated as the 'East' and the 'West'. Swami Vivekananda, the greatest of the Master's disciples, speaking of Sri Ramakrishna, says:

'The more such men are produced in a country, the more that country will be raised; and that country where such men absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is, "Be spiritual and realize Truth for yourself". He would have you give up for the sake of your fellow-beings. He would have you cease talking about love for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has come for renunciation, for realization, and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions, was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realized that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of the One Eternal Religion'.

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'The one thing you need is to realize God. Why do you bother much about the world, creation, "science", and all that? Your business is to eat mangoes. What need have you to know how many hundreds of trees there are in the orchard, how many thousands of branches and how many millions of leaves? . . . Man is born in this world to realize God; it is not good to forget that and divert the mind to other things. You have come to eat mangoes. Eat the mangoes and be happy.'

—Sri Ramakrishna



## "THY NAME IS SILENCE"

By C. T. K. CHARI

(Continued from the January issue)

Was Sri Ramakrishna a theist, a super-theist, or an absolutist? He has answered the question himself. 'Brahman whom the Vedas proclaim the Impersonal is also the Divine Mother, the source of all power, the repository of all blessed qualities'. 'The true knower of Brahman knows that He who is impersonal, without attributes, beyond the Guṇas, is again the Personal God, the God of Love'. The answer is apt to dismay those inveterate pigeon-holders, the philosophers and theologians. Sri Ramakrishna passed neatly between the horns of their irrevocable dilemma: God is *either* personal *or* non-personal. The distinction that Heiler<sup>32</sup> and countless other writers have made between the 'impersonally monistic' and the 'personally theistic' mysticism seems to be imperilled. The transition from the 'logical, rational God, the *ens summum*' to 'a living subjective God—Love, that is Will' that Miguel de Unamuno<sup>33</sup> demanded seems hardly worth while. Long-drawn-out controversies and the numerous treatises that furnish the fuel for them become hopelessly irrelevant. And why should we be surprised? Neither the personal nor the non-personal can limit the nature of God. Even the term 'Superpersonally Personal', coined by N. O. Lossky,<sup>34</sup> can be taken only as a crude statement of the ontological paradox that the Absolute revealed in mystical experience transcends any and every dichotomy and 'synthesis' of the personal and the non-personal (including here the supra-personal) that reason can construct and make

intelligible to itself. Sri Ramakrishna was by no means the only mystic who apprehended God as the Unfathomable Absolute and withal as a Life-giving Presence, a Sweetness surpassing any love that human tongue can stammer, 'Light without measure and Goodness without form'. 'O Love, Divine Love, why hast Thou so pressed on me?' was wrung from Jacopone da Todi.<sup>35</sup> 'If I could only show you a tithe of that Love in which I dwell!', St. Catherine of Genoa<sup>36</sup> exclaimed. God shakes us out of our complacency by His Intimacy as much as by His Immensity. One cannot, and ought not to, force the richly significant episodes in Sri Ramakrishna's life into the procrustean bed of an ill-conceived and one-sided Advaita.<sup>37</sup> C. L. R. Sastry, in a recent issue of *The Modern Review*,<sup>38</sup> has referred to the memorable occasion on which Totāpuri, the convinced Advaitin, was overpowered by the Grace and Love of the Divine Mother. A striking parallel to this is the confutation of Yajñamurti, the redoubtable *māyāvādin*, by Sri Ramanuja, so vividly described by Swami Ramakrishnananda in his life of the saint.<sup>39</sup> Yajnamurti won the argument and, therefore, lost it. Attempts to classify the experiences of great mystics and *ācāryas* according to a preconceived meta-

<sup>35</sup> 'O amor, divino amore—perchè m'hai assediato?' *Lauda*, lxxxii ('Scrittori d'Italia', 1915).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *The Treatise on Purgatory* (London, 1858). von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 2 vols. (London, 1923).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *Mystics and Mysticism*, p. 271. 'To him (Sri Ramakrishna) Brahman, the Absolute of philosophy, reached by the negative method of "*neti, neti*", is also *Bhagavān*. . . .'

<sup>38</sup> July 1951.

<sup>39</sup> See the *Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (August 1951), pp. 147-148.

<sup>32</sup> *Das Gebet* (4th edition, 1921), p. 285.

<sup>33</sup> *The Tragic Sense of Life* (Eng. tr. by J. E. Crawford Flitch), esp. Ch. VIII, 'From God to God', p. 160, p. 166, p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> *Mystical Intuition*, pp. 13 *et seq.*



physical scheme of 'rungs on the ladder' be-taken nothing but human folly and presumption. The scheme of *mārgas* and *Yogas* indicates the pathways of approach to Reality, but in no sense does it furnish the differentiae of the Ultimate. Swami Vivekananda urged, in his 'Conversations and Dialogues', that 'all the difference between a Jñāni and a Bhakta is only in the preparatory stage. The Higher Knowledge and the Higher Bhakti are one and the same'. 'For, what is *cit* is verily the same as *ānanda*'. *Brahmānubhava* is *Brahmānanda*.

Let us remind ourselves that the emblem of the Ramakrishna Order signifies the *harmony* of the four *Yogas* through which alone the vision of the *Paramātman* is attained.<sup>40</sup> The heaving waters symbolizing the *Yoga* of *Karma*, the lotus of *Bhakti*, the rising sun of *Jnana*, and the coiled serpent symbolizing the hidden supersensuous power that *Raja Yoga* releases—are *all* integral to the *disciplina arcani* of Hindu religion as Sri Ramakrishna interpreted it. His lofty mysticism carries us beyond the 'schools' and the 'systems'. It is the best refutation of Dean Inge's charge that in Indian thought 'all between the illusory world of sensation and the undifferentiated absolute seems to drop out'. The subtlety and profundity of Sri Ramakrishna's dialectic consists in its exposure of the complete *petitio principii* involved in the metaphysical query: One or Many? Undifferentiated or Differentiated? To argue from 'Not both' to 'necessarily one of them' is to yield to the professional weakness, the *parti pris*, of a logician and lose touch with much mysticism. I cannot accept the suggestion<sup>41</sup> that, to effect a *rapprochement* between Shankara and Ramanuja', we must posit a distinction between 'pure Advaita' and 'practical Advaita'. Sri Ramakrishna did not need it. As I view it,

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, p. 366. 'The chief way of attaining Him consists in the practice of the four *Yogas* which are interdependent and not independent'.

<sup>41</sup> Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40, 196-197, 362-363.

'pure Advaita' is one of the finest expressions of mystical experience; this is not to say, however, that it differs radically from all other expressions of it. To exhibit the dialectical unity of all mystical religions, we need only deny the unrestricted ontological validity of the laws of logical determinateness. By denying the identity of differences and the identity in differences, Advaita has given one of the subtlest turns to the dialectic of mysticism. To deny differences or identity in differences, however, is not necessarily to assert identity or identity without differences. 'An attempt to carry out the name of "One" in a positive manner', Plotinus warned his pupils, 'would only result in a greater obscuration of the name and the object than if we abstained from considering the name of "One" as the proper name of the first Principle'.<sup>42</sup> We may, following S. L. Frank<sup>43</sup> and N. O. Lossky,<sup>44</sup> propose the new ontological categories, 'metalogical identity' and 'metalogical difference', but reason cannot assimilate them. Human thought sways perilously between a blankly monistic *Ding-an-sich* and a sheerly pluralistic monadic universe.<sup>45</sup> The *mahā-vākya* which asserts the identity of God and the Self must always go beyond the gamut of metaphysical speculation. The Absolute is not a numerical many; nor is it a numerical one. It is not a qualitative many; it is not a qualitative homogeneity either. It would not be Ineffable if it were.

'For the Way is a thing impalpable, incommensurable.

Incommensurable, impalpable.

Yet latent in it are forms;

Impalpable, incommensurable

Yet within it are entities'.<sup>46</sup>

... ..  
'Its true name we do not know

"Way" is the by-name that we give it.'<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Enneads* (Eng. tr. by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie), V. 5, 6. Cf. VI. 9, 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Predmet Znaniya*, p. 237, n. Cited by Lossky.

<sup>44</sup> *Mystical Intuition*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> After his brilliant venture, Lossky falls back exhausted on a monadic universe.

<sup>46</sup> *Tao te Ching*. A. Waley, *The Way and Its Power* (George Allen & Unwin), Ch. XXI.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. XXV.



The Christ-centred Julian of Norwich lapsed into the same obscure language. 'I saw no difference between God and our substance, but, as it were, all God; and yet mine understanding took that our substance is in God. . . .'<sup>48</sup> What do we find in the whole dictionary of the metaphysics of religion but cryptic symbols? Nicholas of Cusa used most of them. *Absoluta omnium quidditas*, the *esse absolutum*, *ipsum esse in existentibus*, the *unum absolutum*, the *vis absoluta*, *possibilitas absoluta*, *valor absolutus*, *valor valorum*, *absoluta vita*, *absoluta ratio*, *absoluta essendi forma*: these and many more are feeble pointers to the Great Incommensurable. Long before Jung, the mystics of all ages and climes realized that a symbol (*Sinnbild*) can have a rational or comprehensible aspect (*Sinn*) and an incomprehensible or supra-rational aspect (*Bild*).<sup>49</sup> Mystical symbolism employs the queerest kind of analogy: the analogy between incommensurables. It is mystical experience (*Brahmānubhava*) alone that holds the key to the formula: '*ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*' ('The Real is One; sages speak in different ways about it').

The pathway of metaphysical negation, we learn from Sri Ramakrishna, culminates in the supreme affirmation. Emerging from his mystical ecstasy, he could say not '*neti, neti*' but '*iti, iti*'. He embraced those round him with tears of joy streaming from his eyes. He sometimes showered on perfect strangers little kindnesses which melted their hearts. In the humblest and the vilest of men he saw Lord Narayana. He had more right than most of us to use the *Gita* text about Jnanis: '*Sarva bhūta hite ratāḥ*'. It was this sanctifying love that led Bergson to characterize Sri Ramakrishna's religion as '*une charité ardente . . . un mysticisme comparable au mysticisme chrétien*'.<sup>50</sup> One is irre-

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Inge, *Studies of English Mystics* (1907), p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Jolan Jacobi, *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* (Kegan Paul, 1942), p. 92.

<sup>50</sup> See the notice of Jean Herbert's *L'Enseignement de Ramakrishna* by R. B. Joshi in the *Vedanta Kesari* for August 1951, p. 157.

sistibly reminded of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. 'In the presence of my Master', Swami Vivekananda testified, 'I found out that man could be perfect'. 'For, what is perfection?'—asked Isaac the Syrian and he answered: 'Depths of humility'.<sup>51</sup> 'When there is much fruit on the tree', Abbot Dorotheus<sup>52</sup> said, 'the branches are bowed down by the fruit . . .'. The following *true* story may serve to illustrate the spirit of Hindu religion. Sri Natekar Swami, on his pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, was overtaken by a band of mounted robbers carrying swords. He and his attendants faced imminent death. Overcoming his fear, he fell into *padmāsana* and passed into a state of ecstasy. When he awoke, his eyes were wet with tears of adoration; the robber chieftain was kneeling before him; the swords were sheathed.<sup>53</sup> Is it not on this resurgent and invincible Love that Dostoevsky's Father Zossima discourses in *The Brothers Karamazov*? 'Brothers, have no fear of man's sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. . . . Embrace each other tenderly and praise God, for if only in you two His truth has been fulfilled. . . . If you sin yourself and grieve unto death for your sins or your hidden sins, then rejoice for others. . . . Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears. Do not be ashamed of that ecstasy, prize it, for it is a gift of God and a great one; it is not given to many but only

<sup>51</sup> Homily cited by Nicholas Arseniew, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church*, p. 49. Cf. the *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Ninevah*, tr. from Bédian's Syriac text by A. J. Wensinck, Amsterdam, 1923.

<sup>52</sup> A saint of the 6-7th centuries. *Dobrotolubie* (the Russian *Philokalia*), ii, 648, cited by Arseniew, *loc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> See *The Holy Mountain* by Bhagawan Sri Hamsa. Eng. tr. from the Marathi by Purohit Swami, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats. Yeats draws attention to the remarkable episode. It is well to remember that Natekar Swami, like Sri Ramakrishna, belongs to comparatively recent times and not to the misty past.



to the elect'.<sup>54</sup> 'Joie, joie, joie, pleurs de joie', Pascal cried, coming out of his mystical transport.<sup>55</sup> And medieval German mysticism speaks of 'genade jubilus'.<sup>56</sup> The Blessed Henry Suso felt the 'godlike pain and longing'.<sup>57</sup> Unless I am seriously mistaken, in the deeper symbolism of the Eastern church, the Russian Easter, with the greeting '*Christos woskresse!*' (Christ is risen!) and the response '*Woistinu woskresse!*' ('Verily He is risen!'),<sup>58</sup> acquires a cosmic significance. It carries the promise of the Universal Resurrection of Humanity. Dostoevsky uses the transcendent image of the Wedding Feast to which souls are summoned unceasingly and in countless numbers, even those who have 'given away one little onion'. It is the Feast to which the resurrected Father Zossima calls Alyosha.<sup>59</sup>

The transfiguration of human selves is one of the incomparable achievements of the true mystical union with God. There is nothing like it. Attempts to translate it into the vocabulary of the much vaunted scientific psychology of today may result in jargon but little more. We read in the *Dialogue of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross: 'He caused them, merely through the reflection of His countenance, to be clothed with His beauty'.<sup>60</sup> The sufi and dervish Bābā Kūhī of Shiraz

<sup>54</sup> *The Brothers Karamazov*, (Eng. tr. by Constance Garnett) Everyman's Library, Vol. I, Bk. VI, Ch. III, 'Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima'.

<sup>55</sup> Arseniew, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>57</sup> 'von göttlichen Jammer und Begierde', Arseniew, p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> Arseniew, Part I, Ch. II; Part II, Ch. VII.

<sup>59</sup> *The Brothers Karamazov*, Bk. VII, Ch. IV, 'Cana of Galilee'. The finest exposition of the ethics and the metaphysics of Christianity in my opinion.

<sup>60</sup> 'Mil Gracias derramando,

Pasó por estos sotos con presura;

Y yendolos mirando,

Con sola su figura

Vestidos los dejó de su hermosura'.

Cited by E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics* (The Sheldon Press, London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 273.

(died 1050 A.D.) 'was overwhelmed by his experience of God. 'I opened my eyes and through the radiance of His countenance around me, in everything that my eye perceived—I saw only God!'<sup>61</sup> Jalal-uddin-Rumi was borne on waves of Love. 'Every moment, from the right hand, and from the left, soundeth the voice of Love'.<sup>62</sup> Tukaram accosted God thus: 'All the world says that there is not a space so minute as a sesamum seed without Thee'.<sup>63</sup> 'Worlds upon worlds Thy Presence fills', Mānikka-Vāsagar sang.<sup>64</sup> 'With the earth as bowl and the shining sun for lamp, I make a garland of hymns and place it at Thy Feet!', was Poigai Āzhvār's thanksgiving.<sup>65</sup> Kabir sang:

'The melody of love swells forth and the rhythm of love's detachment beats the time,

Day and night, the chorus of music fills the heavens'.<sup>66</sup>

St. Francis of Assisi 'saw in every creature the goodness of God in its perfect form, wherefore he was possessed by an extraordinary love for created things'.<sup>67</sup> His intimate disciples 'saw him rejoice, inwardly and outwardly, over almost all creatures, in such measure that when he touched them and contemplated them, his spirit seemed to be not

<sup>61</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (Bell, London, 1914), p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Selected poems from the *Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, edited and translated by R. A. Nicholson (1898), No. IX, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, and minor Religious Systems* (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1928), p. 136. First Coll., No. 4419.

<sup>64</sup> G. U. Pope, *Tiruvāṇṇam* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1900), hymn xxxvii, 8; cf. V. 48, 70.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>66</sup> *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, Tagore's translation.

<sup>67</sup> '... in qualibet creatura bonitatem Dei perfecte cernebat, propter quod singulari et viscerosa dilectione afficiebatur ad creaturas'. *Speculum perfectionis*, c. 113, cited by Arseniew, *op. cit.*, p. 97.



upon earth but in heaven'.<sup>68</sup> Vladimir Soloviev, the great poet-philosopher of Russia, who tasted the mystical ecstasy, wrote the lines—

'Dear Friend, seest thou not  
That whatever we look on here  
Is but an image, shadows only  
Of a beauty hid from our eyes?  
Dear Friend, hear'st thou not  
This jarring tumult of life  
As but a far discordant echo  
Of heaven's triumphant harmonies?  
Dear Friend, know'st thou not  
That the only truth in the world  
Is what one heart tells another  
In speechless greetings of Love?'<sup>69</sup>

Dante's *Paradiso*<sup>70</sup> hints at the same ecstasy:

'The light eternal which to view alone  
Ne'er fails to kindle love, and if aught else  
Your love seduce, 'tis but that it shows  
Some ill-mark'd vestige of that primal  
beam'.<sup>71</sup>

And if we divest ourselves of our philosophical and theological trappings, do we not find the same truth conveyed in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*? 'For, out of joy these creatures spring . . . and into joy they return when they depart hence'. In Buddhist texts too we read: 'We live in great joy who possess

<sup>68</sup> ' . . . in tantum videbamus ipsum interius et exterius laetari quasi in omnibus creaturis quod ipsos tangendo vel videndo non in terra, sed in caelo ejus spiritus videbatur'. *Ibid.*, c. 118, Arseniew, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> Eng. tr. by Nevill Forbes in R. Bridges's Anthology, *The Spirit of Man* (1929). For an appreciation of Soloviev's place in Russian literature, see A. Brückner, *A Literary History of Russia* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1908) and D. S. Mirski's *Contemporary Russian Literature 1881-1925* (Routledge 1921), pp. 72 *et seq.* For the profound influence which Soloviev exercised on Dostoevsky, see E. H. Carr, *Dostoevsky* (George Allen & Unwin, 1931). Soloviev in turn was swayed by Dostoevsky.

<sup>70</sup> V, 8-12. Eng. tr. by H. F. Cary (Cassell & Co., London, 1903).

<sup>71</sup> ' . . . l'eterna luce  
Che vesta sola sempre amor accende;  
E s'altra cosa vostro amor seduce  
Non è, se non di quella alcun vestigio  
Mal conosciuto, che quivi traluce'.

nothing. . . .'<sup>72</sup> To possess nothing is to possess the one great treasure.<sup>73</sup>

What language can convey these joyful tidings? Let us listen to Sri Ramakrishna. 'True it is that the Vedas and the other Scriptures speak of Him. But do you know what their speaking is like? When a man returns from seeing the ocean for the first time and is asked to describe it, he exclaims in amazement, "Oh, a vast expanse! Huge waves! A thundering roar!" Like unto this is the talk about God. The Vedas declare that Brahman is Absolute Existence, Knowledge, Bliss. Shukadeva and other great saints, standing on the shore of the Infinite Ocean, saw and touched It'. It is the image of the Deep: the image that recurs in the great

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 'Buddhism, like other religions, has developed mysticism, and one aspect of the secret doctrine claims to connect the mortal with the immortal, the transitory with the eternal verities of existence'. (H. S. Gour, *The Spirit of Buddhism*).

<sup>73</sup> I cannot possibly admit the force or the cogency of the stock criticism that, in Oriental mysticism, the problems of sin, suffering, and death are systematically ignored or underrated. This is not the place or the occasion to argue the point. See Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari's scholarly refutation, *op. cit.*, pp. 90 *et seq.*, 346 *et seq.* I content myself here with a brief reference to Julian of Norwich. At the close of her *Revelations of Divine Love* (Ch. xxiii), she expresses her firm conviction of the Infinite and Victorious Power of Divine Love. 'Ah, wretched sin, what art thou? Thou are nought! For I saw that God is all-thing. I saw not thee. And when I saw that God has made all-thing, I saw thee not. And when I saw that God does all-thing that is done, less and more, I saw thee not'. Arseniew himself (*op. cit.*, note 274) draws our attention to the fact that Julian of Norwich often used the word 'sin' not only to denote the ethically evil but in its widest sense to denote evil, imperfection, and pain, 'all that is not good' (Ch. xiii). It is, of course, open to the Church to deny that mysticism is the highest expression of Christianity. But will scholars like Arseniew, Evelyn Underhill, and Rufus M. Jones agree? The mere inability to reach a unanimous verdict on the momentous issue should make Western scholars more tolerant and more careful in examining the claims of Oriental mysticism.



mystical literature of the world.<sup>74</sup> 'Every spiritual existence', Kierkegaard confessed, 'is out on 70,000 fathoms of water'.<sup>75</sup> 'However long (the believer) may lie out there, there is no assurance that little by little he will find himself lying upon land, stretched out at his ease'.<sup>76</sup> St. Catherine of Siena, one of the most Christo-centric and devotional of mystics (according to conventional classifications), found that God is He Who *IS*. The creature, therefore, must be he who is *not* or rather the only *being* the creature can have is in God. It is 'like one who dives into the sea and is swimming under its waters. He neither sees nor touches anything save the waters of the sea and the things that are in those waters; he sees nothing outside those waters, touches nothing, feels nothing'.<sup>77</sup> Sri

<sup>74</sup> And in much poetry. See Longfellow's *Sound of the Sea*, A. E.'s *By the Margin of the Great Deep*, and Leopardi's *L'Infinito*.

<sup>75</sup> *Journals*, 1065.

<sup>76</sup> *Stages on Life's Way*, p. 402.

<sup>77</sup> Citation in Michael de la Bedoyere's *Catherine, Saint of Siena* (Hollis and Carter, London, 1947), p. 37. Catherine was not a 'learned' woman. But Count de la Bedoyere startles us by saying that her work is fit to take its place 'in the best Italian prose of its period'. (*Ibid.*, p. 34) 'Eminent Italian critics rank it with Boccaccio as in the very forefront of fourteenth century Italian letters'. In my article in the *Aryan Path* (October 1950) I have drawn attention to the deeply significant 'psychic' episodes in Catherine's life. They go far beyond anything that modern 'parapsychologists' have discovered about Selves. They also reveal the unwisdom of dismissing all such incidents as mere 'occultism', 'necromancy' etc. Even learned philosophers are seen to make a great deal of the conventional antithesis between 'occultism' and 'mysticism'. There are many 'psychic' episodes in Sri Ramakrishna's life. For a correct appraisal of this aspect of mysticism, see Lossky, *Mystical Intuition*, section 3, 'Visions' and 4, 'The Human Self as an Object of Mystical Intuition'. Al-Hallâj, the Saint of Baghdad, has often been extolled. But it is usual to maintain a discreet silence about his apports of food which, according to the psychical researcher and sceptic *pur sang*, Dr. E. J. Dingwall, 'are some of the most remarkable ever recorded'. (*Very Peculiar People*, Rider, 1950, p. 64.) Only those who read Dr. Dingwall's book will understand what his admission means. To admit even the possibility of apports will throw modern science into convulsions.

Ramakrishna, in his inimitable fashion, hints at the deeper significance of mystical symbolism. 'A doll made of salt goes forth to sound the depth of the ocean. But it never comes back to tell what it has learned'. All the wonders of the outer universe, its galaxies and spiral nebulae, shrivel into insignificance besides this. 'In this wonder', Meister Eckhart admonished his disciples, 'let us remain, for human wit is powerless to fathom it. Plumbing the deeps of Divine Wonder but stirs facile doubt'.<sup>78</sup>

The only homage we can pay to Sri Ramakrishna, the only temple we can consecrate to him, is Silence. And yet not the muteness which spells nothing, which signifies nothing. It is rather the 'pause in sacred Art' of which Swami Vivekananda spoke in his poem 'Peace'. Dean Inge cites Dodds's remark that within two generations after the death of Plotinus his dialectical tension of opposites had dwindled into the meaningless affirmation of incompatibles and 'unification' had become a pious formula on the lips of professors. No worse fate can befall mysticism. The Ramakrishna Order is unique in its aims, ideals, and practices. Its members have no mean responsibilities to shoulder. They are the custodians of a mystical religion that knows no frontiers of race, creed, or language.<sup>79</sup> It was the amplitude of Hindu thought that made even H. Kraemer admit in his *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* that, in the Indian atmosphere, any monopolistic claim to truth 'may be, and often is, coarse irreverence or vulgar mediocrity'. For a scholarly account of these puzzling phenomena associated with mysticism, see Dr. Montague Summers's *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Rider, London, 1950), esp. Ch. 2. The time has come for the West to take up these questions.

<sup>78</sup> Meister Eckhart (adapted from Pfeiffer's translation of 1857) by C. De B. Evans, Vol. 1 (Watkins, London, 1924), 'Sermons and Collations', XII, p. 47.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari's considered estimate, *op. cit.*, p. 271. 'Sri Ramakrishna is the incarnation of the synthetic genius of philosophy and religion in modern times. . . . By his experiments in religion, he discovered the unity and harmony of all religions'.



crity'. The Ramakrishna Order will compel this admission all the world over so long as its members are loyal to the spirit of the Master's teaching and are undeterred by the fear of 'syncretism' which assails professional theologians and philosophers.

We thank Thee Lord  
For all Thy golden Silences

Silence of dawns, silence of high golden noons, silence of gloamings and setting suns, silence of moonlight and patterned glades, silence of stars. But above all for

Silence of Soul wherein we come to Thee  
And find ourselves in Thine immensity.<sup>80</sup>

(Concluded)

<sup>80</sup> John Oxenham, *The Later Te Deums*.

## THE MEANING OF INDIAN ART MOTIFS

BY DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI

To the average academic aesthetician, or even to the dilettante, the art motifs of India have been more or less a curious riddle, for the usual approach to these has been much too scholastic and formal to penetrate into their inner meaning or connotation. That India's art evolved as a phase of spiritual striving is a fact which has yet to be properly assessed and analysed. The conventional formulae of Western art criticism, as and when they are applied in the case of Indian art, fail to bring out the real significance of its profound philosophic basis. In the West, art motifs represent the artist's own personal reactions to his environment and his personal moods as well. But, in India, where art was always a form of devotional meditation, motifs grew up as symbols, not of individual moods but of popular concepts derived from some particular school of philosophy. Unless the on-looker is in a position to comprehend the basic principles of that philosophy, he cannot reach the heart of the matter. No motif can be truly appreciated unless it is judged in the perspective of the way of thinking from which it is derived.

In Indian art, motifs were both metaphysical and ethical in their make-up and meaning, and these exemplified an outlook which was always impersonal and universal. Moral and social values mainly determined

the content of the various types of motifs. These were cast in a philosophic or spiritual mould, intelligible no less to the cultured than to the common man. If there was humanism in Indian art, that humanism could never transcend the basic spirituality of the artistic creation. It is the unique fusion of morality and humanism which has given rise to confusion of ideas about the nature of some of the artistic archetypes. Such archetypes, even though they mirror grossness of feeling, indicate a symbolism which was universally recognized as transcendental and inspiring. The most well-known archetype of the *Nāṭa-rāja*, notwithstanding all its outward expression of the supreme joy of physical movement, reflects in reality the balanced harmony of the three cosmic forces of creation, preservation, and destruction. Even the apparently sensuous archetypes of *Rādhā-Krishna* and *Śiva-Pārvatī* are in fact an artistic expression of the mysticism and transcendentalism which are part and parcel of Indian philosophy.

If, thus, the Indian art motifs have any connotation, they signify the eternal duality of creation and destruction, repose and motion, Being and Becoming. Each motif is the concrete image of human reaction to the deep mysteries of life and the universe. The anthropomorphic or theomorphic motifs such as the *Yaksha*, *Nāga*, and *Kinnara*, or



*Ganeśa*, *Narasimha*, and *Dakṣha Prajāpati* were inspired by abstract conceptions of the supernatural or metaphysical elements in Nature or in the universe. The rhythms of life and creation were symbolized in anthropomorphic images which, despite their crude or even inelegant externals, are a conceptualization of man's early 'god-ideas'. The great *Bodhisattva* motif in Buddhist art marked an advance on man's God consciousness, for this motif pictures the apotheosis of human striving after Nirvāṇa. Even the conventional lotus is symbolic of the cosmic force. If any motif is thus carefully studied and analysed, it will be found that it is the representation of some form of the primordial Spirit, or of some attribute of *puruṣa* (Being) or *prakṛti* (Becoming). All so-called erotic images and motifs are illustrative of the varied manifestations of the dynamism of the eternal masculine and the eternal feminine. The grossness of such motifs cannot hide the underlying devotional background of man's response to the interaction of Being and Becoming. The remarkable *Ardhanārīśvara* motif is the artistic culmination of India's expressionistic interpretation of the dual metaphysical masculine and feminine principles merged in a perfect blend.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose, as might easily appear, that art in India was just the mere handmaid of philosophy or religion. It is true that art cherished and ennobled religion and ethics; yet it was more than a handmaid, for, it was a phase of philosophy or religion itself. Not only was there no subordination of one to the other, but both were parallel expressions of the soul's striving after the Infinite. One was the complement of the other. Art motifs were thus an objectification of some particular concepts of mystical philosophy. Even if symbolism was often esoteric or sensuous, it was always based on metaphysical principles.

Writers have associated Indian art motifs with different cults and religions such as Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Śaiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava etc. Such classification is more

superficial than correct. It is true that a particular cult or religion laid special stress on some art motif, but the fact remains that there was no hard and fast or rigid differentiation thereof in terms of religious belief. Many of the popular motifs were common to all cults. The *Yaksha* is to be found in Hindu and Buddhist shrines equally. Motifs like *Kuvera* (guardian of the north), *Śrī* (goddess of prosperity), *Virūpākṣa* (guardian of the west), or *Sudarśana* (guardian of still waters) were actually Brahminical in origin; yet they found a place in Buddhist art as well. Similarly, many of the iconographic motifs were common to the Buddhists and the Jains. Again, some of the motifs were associated with different cults in Hinduism. At Amaravati, the older Brahminical symbols exist alongside of the Buddha archetype. Even the familiar *Bodhisattva* type reminds the observer of the worship of *Vishṇu* who was both God and man as *Vāsudeva* or in any one of His various Avatars. At Ajanta, where Buddhist influence is predominant, the older Hindu motifs such as the *Makara* (water-beast), the *Yaksha* etc. are common. The *Nandi* pavilion or the *Makara* arch is a familiar feature in shrines of all cults. The *Nāga* likewise is seen most frequently. The *Mātrkā* types, which were essentially Śaiva and which represent mental attributes, are to be met with everywhere. Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava motifs coexist at Ellora. Flying figures on the walls or *Dvārapālas* on door-ways are among the commonest decorative motifs in Indian architecture.

The Western critic likes every motif to be listed and labelled. There lies the wrong approach to Indian art, for, it is not possible, correctly speaking, to classify or label Indian art motifs. Their variety is as wide as their application is wide-spread and universal. From the time of Harappa and Mohenjodaro onwards there is to be seen a steady growth of art traditions and art symbols. But behind the medley of forms there is one common note which characterized them all. That common note is the refusal to look upon



Spirit and flesh as either contradictory or antithetical. In Western art, there is a dualism between Spirit and flesh, or mind and body. In Indian art, however, there is no such antithesis. The Indian artist did not only refuse to divorce Spirit from flesh but juxtaposed and blended both in one indivisible whole which might surprise or shock the Western critic. Erotic sculptures in temples look jarring to the latter, for they seem bizarre and out of place; yet these only reflect the artist's attempt to combine sensation and understanding, the beautiful and the edifying, the sublime and the secular, the physical and the moral, the transient and the immutable, the finite and the infinite. The Indian art motifs are in fact as varied and as rich as life itself, and their very complexity or exuberance is indicative of an attitude which is hastily dismissed as an obsession by those who do not care to understand the natural idiom of Indian art or Indian philosophy.

The study of Indian art motifs is possible only through the various Śāstras and Pūrāṇas which deal with iconographical matter. The relevant *dhyāna-śloka*s give us the clue to an understanding of the meaning of many of the images which baffle the modern rational mind. The entire symbology of Indian art serves to portray life as a composite whole, and not in watertight compartments. The profusion of art motifs serves to indicate the mystical or transcendental attitudes wherein both devotional meditation and enjoyment of the senses were so characteristically and harmoniously blended.

The supposed overgrowth of motifs in Indian art has been regarded as bewildering in content and variety. But the overgrowth itself is more apparent than real. Again, it must not be forgotten that the Indian archi-

tect was a sculptor no less than a mason. Architecture grew up side by side with sculpture, and both adorned each other, and both were expressions of man's joy of living and his yearning for the Divine. The multiplication of forms and motifs was only one way of experimenting with the Infinite in the finite, the Unseen in the visible, the Eternal in the transitory, and the Sublime in the grotesque. It is perhaps necessary to point out that lotuses, elephants, serpents, and such other familiar motifs were not primarily symbolical but concrete realities known to every villager in India. These common realities were adopted in the art idiom of India as the intelligible symbols of profound ideas and attitudes in a manner as is nowhere seen in the world. For example, the trivial *āmalaka* or the ordinary *kalāśa* became the emblem of a mystical concept. Evidently, in Indian art, the meaning was not in an object but in the penetrating eyes that observed it. The lotus was just an ordinary flower, but to the discerning eye it appeared to typify a cosmic reality. The external merely drew the mind to the esoteric, and the accepted and recognized symbol helped the on-looker in his meditation.

In no other art known to world history are the infinite rhythms of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* i.e. Being and Becoming, portrayed in such exuberant and varied symbology as in the Indian. The dancing *Naṭarāja* is perhaps the finest art motif that the world has seen, and this motif, which is illustrative of the cosmic motion, sums up the transformation of Indian art from an aesthetic pursuit to a process of God realization. Never has art been elevated anywhere else to such a lofty plane as in India, and nowhere else has artistic imagination reached a nobler culmination.



# THE CONTROL OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

*(Continued from the January issue)*

## MAN, A MIXTURE OF GOOD AND EVIL

There are psychologists and psychologists. A class of psychologists is becoming a menace to society. Themselves psychopaths, they think in terms of only the weakness of the men and women who turn to them for help. Some of them give harmful advice to their patients saying, 'Go and express your instincts'. In most cases, the patients who follow such instructions come to grief.

We have to sublimate and purify all our various instincts, innate tendencies, and habits. We have to give them a higher turn. Most psychologists speak of socializing the instincts. Hindu teachers also speak more or less in that strain, but they say something more. Sex instinct and all other various instincts can be socialized. They can be directed upwards so that the energy may be transmuted into something higher. A husband and wife, leading a normal life, must utilize their instincts, raise children, train them properly, promote the welfare of society, and then should try to spiritualize the instincts in due course.

The spiritual teachers of India declare that in every being there is a conscious or sub-conscious urge for Ananda or bliss which usually takes a wrong direction towards sense-enjoyment. Following the right course, the soul can undergo moral and spiritual disciplines, attain its union with the Supreme Spirit, and thus find its highest fulfilment in the Bliss Supreme.

We have in us both wonderfully good things and awfully bad things. Those who say man is vile, man is a bundle of evil, are telling a lie because man possesses good qualities along with bad ones. Some of us may be selfish at times; all the same, we have the

capacity to make self-sacrifices. Some of us may be angry and very egoistic, but again, there are moments when we show great humility. Some of us may be swayed by passions at times, but we also have, at the same time, a great power of self-control. So we have to take stock of the best as well as the worst in us and then find ways and means to eliminate what is bad and strengthen what is good. As a psychologist tells us, those who have to live an unmarried life, either out of necessity or choice, can find higher love and interests and enjoy a satisfaction which no physical pleasure can give. Observes a wise psychologist: 'Sublimation is the lot of all of us. The object of all civilized life, married or unmarried, must be to find its sublimated interests. Fortunately for us and for society, many of our desires must be denied fulfilment. Each of us, therefore, is left with a considerable amount of energy which must be distributed'.

'A love which is not satisfied on the personal level may be fulfilled in the warmth of religious devotion.' Here we have an ideal not only of socializing but of spiritualizing our nature. The Vedantic Seers tell us that in every being there is a deep-rooted yearning for bliss, because that is the true nature of man, of his Spirit. But owing to ignorance man follows the wrong course and brings misery on himself. But he need not go that way. There is a better way than that. There is the way to the purification of emotions through which the soul moves towards self-realization.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION

Many a time the question is asked: Are psychologists against religion? One of them



answers the question, saying, 'Hardly. If you get comfort from prayer, pray, by all means. But don't pray for a gift of a new set of automobile tires. (This the psychologist wrote during the war when tires were scarce). Pray for an enlargement of your sense of decency and fair play. Pray for gentleness and appreciation of the integrity of personality to keep you from pushing other people around'.

Dr. Jung, the well-known psychologist, goes further: 'Among all my patients in the second half of life, that is to say, over thirty-five, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them felt ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them have been really healed, who did not regain his religious outlook'.

Evidently, since Dr. Jung has a religious outlook, patients of that type go to him. This shows that there are patients whose troubles are of a religious nature. Just as we may be starved physically, so also may we be starved emotionally. We may suffer from the starvation caused by the lack of spiritual emotions. There are many such cases. The persons were ill and the cause of the ailment was that they did not know how to express the higher spiritual emotions along the proper channels. When their channels were found, they became sane, healthy, and balanced.

### THREE KINDS OF TROUBLE IN LIFE

Generally, where do our troubles lie? Vedanta tells us that our troubles lie within ourselves. We must take full responsibility for ourselves. No person can harm us or do us wrong unless there is some trouble within us, and if we take care of the trouble that is within us, everything will be all right.

There are three kinds of trouble because of which we suffer. First, it may be troubles caused by the elements—such as a storm, an awful snow-fall, or heavy floods. The second form of troubles comprises those that may be created by other human beings or animals.

The third form of troubles includes those that arise within our body and mind. What is most important is that we should try to get rid of the troubles that we cherish within ourselves, i.e. within our body, our conscious and sub-conscious mind. We are sometimes aware how deep-rooted our tendencies are. There is a story: A woman was bitten by a rabid dog and she developed hydrophobia. She was in a hospital. She did not lose her mind yet. The doctor told her, 'I am giving you paper and ink. Write your will'. The doctor found she was making a list, writing many, many things and took quite a time at it. He asked, 'What are you doing?' She was getting mad to some extent. She said, 'I am making a list of those I am going to bite'. Some of us in our death-bed may do the same thing. What would become of those deepest, often unwelcome and unhealthy, thoughts and feelings we cherish within ourselves? They are to be disposed of by following the right means.

### CONTROL OF THE MIND THROUGH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

It is very difficult to get rid of deep-seated emotions such as anger, hatred, jealousy, love, and fear. But Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Patanjali in the *Yoga-Sutras* tell us very clearly that through practice it is possible. It is very hard, very difficult to control the mind, especially the sub-conscious aspect of it. But by following the right methods one can certainly do that. But, first of all, we ourselves must be convinced. We must change before we want to change the world.

In all the various forms of Yoga, the first emphasis is laid on moral practice. It means giving our tendencies, our mental energy especially, not a lower but a higher turn, in order not only to socialize them but also spiritualize them. We all must practise freedom from attachment. We must maintain enthusiasm. We should try to work in a spirit of worship. We should try to be truthful and sincere. We should also try to do



good to others without thought of return. We should not think vain thoughts, but should learn how to stop the wandering of our mind.

The Yoga aphorisms tell us that while we may have in us certain tendencies to harm others, to covet what belongs to others, to be unchaste, and to be dependent on others, we should try to practise just the opposite because we have all the potentialities for following the right course, too, just as we have the tendencies to follow the wrong one. But spiritual life is something more than a mere moral life. Along with the practise of moral virtues we must have spiritual disciplines also. Always remember Ishvara, the Supreme Spirit, as you work. Let your hands be busy with work. Fill your mind and heart with divine thoughts. There must be prayer, but not for earthly things. Let there be prayer for obtaining a better power of understanding. After the manner of the well-known *Gāyatrī* Mantra, one could pray best: 'May the Lord—the Supreme Spirit, who dwells in the sun, who dwells in all beings, who dwells in the heart,—may He guide our understanding! May He lead us along the spiritual path and enlighten our consciousness'.

The ideal in spiritual life is self-realization. As a profound psychologist, Sri Krishna says, in the *Gita*, 'When a person is practising control, he naturally cuts himself off from outside objects; but the taste or subtle hankering within does not go. This subtle desire can go only with the attainment of self-realization'. In the *Yoga-Sutras*, Patanjali tells us how these Samskaras (desires and passions), lying as impediments in the path of self-realization, are to be taken to their subtle forms. Samskaras are to be controlled, as Swami Vivekananda says, in the germ, in the root, in their finer forms. How are we to do that? Meditation helps us a great deal. If we have calmed our mind to some extent through moral practices and prayers, meditation becomes a great help. When we control the mind we go to a great extent into the

innermost recesses of the mind and there discover all the troubles that are lying hidden. By the disciplines of Yoga, gross Samskaras (tendencies) are to be controlled, are to be attenuated. Through special moral practices, prayers, and various forms of spiritual disciplines we should come to possess that introspection and power of self-analysis which can enable us to discover the subtlest forms of lurking troubles and desires, and also to disentangle ourselves from them as completely as possible.

The psychologists, too, stress this point, but they stop half-way. One should discover the cause of one's troubles within one's sub-conscious mind and try to rid oneself of them. Swami Vivekananda says, 'We become identified with our emotions, but when this inner vision, this introspection awakens in us, we discover our troubles in their subtlest form and, at the same time, we can say, "I am not troubles", "I am not my anger, I am separate from it", "I am separate from these emotions", "I am separate from all these tendencies", "I am a free soul".'

The seeds of desire are to be burnt, and they are burnt only when self-realization is attained. When we can light the fire of knowledge and self-realization within, all seeds of desire are burnt away and the soul becomes free. Ignorance breeds egotism, egotism breeds aversion and attachment, and then comes the clinging to life and all its inevitable troubles. We must learn how to move from the gross to the subtle. With this introspection that is born as a result of moral practice and spiritual discipline, we must rise to higher and higher planes of consciousness, dissociating ourselves from attachment and aversion, from egotism and ignorance, which in fact are the root of all troubles. Sri Krishna very clearly declares, 'Even the subtlest forms of desire fall away when the Supreme Spirit is seen'.

If we wish to have perfect control over the sub-conscious mind, the first step would be the practice of moral disciplines, and then the practice of prayer and meditation. We



should remember that the troubles will be over only with the attainment of self-realization. During physical abstention the mind retains the longing; these subtle desires disappear and the very seeds of desires are burnt only by the fire of the Knowledge of the Spirit.

By following the moral and spiritual path with earnestness and steadiness, one learns the secret of lighting the fire of Knowledge

within oneself so that it may burn away, sooner or later, all worldly tendencies and desires. The Spirit then shines forth in all its splendour. That is the way to be free and blissful. We must undergo spiritual disciplines in a systematic way if we want to put an end to all our troubles, conscious and sub-conscious, and attain true spiritual illumination, peace, and bliss.

*(Concluded)*

## WHAT VEDANTA MEANS TO ME

BY KURT FRIEDRICH

On the little island of Heligoland in the North Sea, where I first became conscious of the phenomenal world around me, there were only a few objects between sky and sea to which one might have become attached; and the few space-filling things were heavy, mighty, and at first seemed to me to be unfortunately unalterable.

My youth among the red rocks on the island was made up of books and solitude and permitted a mysterious imaginative capacity to grow up within me, which made me completely independent of my environment and of people. As there was nobody in my little shut-off world with whom I could have shared my strange experiences—let alone a teacher with a trained intellect, or a spiritual leader—the relationships and connections with my own self remained hidden to me for many years, although the experiences themselves were none the less intense and impressive. They had only the important difference that they did not arise as a result of my own power and volition but rather rushed at me without control, and yet always left an indescribable happiness behind them.

From my earliest youth I was governed by a strange, ungrounded fear, fear of each morning to come, of every meeting with people;

each new day seemed to be filled with threatening unrest, insecurity, and uncertainty. Sadness and melancholy often occupied my thoughts to such an extent that in tiredness and resignation I yearned for a never-ending sleep from which there would be no return to this horrible world. But one day there came an experience which soon in the force of its repetition was to become much finer and more sublime than the deepest and longest sleep could be.

One afternoon, at low tide on the west coast of the island, as I was climbing over the seaweed-covered rocks in order to have a rest beneath an overhanging cliff, washed out by the surf of many centuries, a spiritual ecstasy suddenly took possession of me. The waves breaking at my feet and the endless surface of water stretching away to the vanishing point all of a sudden threw me into another sphere of consciousness. I myself was surf, sea, and infinity. Time, space, body-consciousness—everything was blotted out, drawn up into an absolute consciousness of light and bliss. I have no idea of how long this condition lasted, but I felt the elation long afterwards until it slowly made room again for the fear that this experience, as an arbitrary condition brought about by chance, would never recur, and my



state of mind might be worse than before in its insatiable longing for complete unity with the whole world.

And yet, beneath the same cliff wall, in the rhythm of the breaking waves and the swinging harmony of the endless sky and sea, I was again and again thrown out of my rational and bodily limitations. But, however much my normal consciousness searched and rationalized, it could not explain this condition of transformation, and I sought yearningly for descriptions of similar experiences in the writings of the great of humanity who bear witness to the tireless struggle for knowledge and truth.

I found wonderful descriptions of contemplation in the works of such mystics as Eckhart, Suso, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, and Boehme. Their God vision was to me the expression of the highest experience of divine ecstasy. With fanatic zeal, I read everything I could discover on metaphysics, philosophy, psychology, mysticism, and religion. Everywhere the same truths, differentiated only by degree! What an incomparable rational experience, to find accounts of the same truth in Pythagoras, in Plato, in the Eleusinian Mysteries, in the experiences of Buddhist saints, in Zen, in the *Tao Te Ching*, in the Upanishads, and in the *Gita*. After all these truths from the various centuries, recognized by various races of various confessions, the saying of the Upanishads seemed to soothe and encourage: 'Truth is one, but sages call it by various names'.

But the acquaintance with this wisdom did not make me happy, did not liberate me; and even while reading the *Gita* with reverence or enjoying the glorious instructions of the Upanishadic sage, Yājñavalkya, I never experienced that state which so often overwhelmed me beneath the rocky cliff. All these grand worlds lay as if behind glass. My mind told me of their greatness and significance for the spiritual development of humanity; yet they never stirred my whole being; they never let the Self break out of its bodily prison as it did in the experiences by the cliff,

when my consciousness embraced the whole world.

And so I came to the bitter realization that all these great truths were not identical with my deeds and thoughts, but rather that the mind just touched upon them, to be snatched away the next instant by some sensory impression of ordinary daily life, attached to matter and transience. A deep pain sought me out anew—the consciousness of a laming insufficiency. Yet from this sorrow, which lasted many years, arose the knowledge that the final and highest aim of my life could be to make this once-experienced, world-embracing, blissful consciousness of my own Self flow as an oil-like, deep undercurrent, which never could be cut off by any sense-impression of the phenomenal world.

And yet, who could show me how to carry out this intention in practice; who could tell me the price which would have to be paid? However much I discussed the problem with intellectuals, clergymen, and psychologists, they all gave me mere words, for none of them knew anything about the experience of the Self. Often used terms like 'sub-conscious', 'grace', and 'enlightenment' gave no indication of how one might actually come to this highest experience. While studying Buddhism I received for the first time the certainty that every man is destined to attain liberation as soon as he is willing to pay the price for it, namely, giving up all his attachments. And once, after long considering such thoughts, it seemed as if I were again sitting under that cliff at home. Before me lay the ocean of world consciousness; all sects, all religions, all struggles for truth—waves of the same ocean. So many spiritually striving people, so many great and small waves, so many ways to God.

Soon afterwards I entered the gigantic thought-construction of the Vedanta, this genius work created by the eternal human search for truth. From the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara that same bliss flowed upon me which I had already experienced as a child viewing the endless sea. In amazement I learned that all worry, all fear, was vain; that



my human birth and the irresistible yearning for liberation had set me on the way to the final goal. Vedanta gave me the certainty that every seeker obtains help from the great souls who have already travelled along that path and to whom all-embracing knowledge brought also all-embracing love. Vedanta magically transformed the world for me. I suddenly saw the phenomenal world in a completely different light, and behind the material universe the eternal principles dawned upon me. It soon seemed to me a matter of course that every spiritually minded person was destined to meet Vedanta, because each bears Vedanta in himself and can experience the highest state only in the final identification of Atman and Brahman.

A fatherly friend, who had long been steeped in Vedanta, helped me to learn that the struggle for Truth is also a wavelike motion, and I became able to overcome the depression which took place after every new achievement. Through him I found the way to Swami Yatiswarananda—who then, in the 1930's, was conducting classes in various European countries—and in the Swami I saw the certainty and proof that all the truths that the mind is capable of perceiving can also be lived as well. Swami Yatiswarananda opened to me the significance of Sri Ramakrishna and his message. Then it seemed to me as if, after long wandering, I had returned to the abode of my own Self.

When Europe became involved in war, which tore me away from my beloved island, I got to know the cities of the Continent as well, with their masses and the dreadful turmoil of secularized civilization; a devouring longing for the experiences beside the sea took possession of me. I yearned for nothing other than island solitude and the extension of my previous experiences to the complete penetration of myself.

But the war took everything, even my home, with all the earthly possessions that men call their own. . . . Without Vedanta

I would have become the victim of despair, grief, and hate. But its knowledge brought me peace of mind. It taught me that even home, the nearest and dearest of my conceptions and memories, had to break down so that I might become free from all attachments in order to attain the truth that there is only one enduring home, only one refuge in the universe—the Self. And experienced the same as Omar Khayyam who, searching for Dschemshid's bowl that mirrored the world, learned from his master that he himself was the famous goblet. But this time it was not to stop at mere rational knowledge; this time the teacher was found who knew the way to realization and the price which had to be paid. Through study of the scriptures, company of enlightened souls, Japam, and meditation, Vedanta proved to me that this wonderful extension of consciousness toward an all-embracing oneness, which I had enjoyed as a grace on the island, was my own birthright, my own Self, my real, divine nature. Vedanta showed me that, after overcoming all causal limitations, it was possible to become absolute consciousness—*sat-cit-ānanda*.

Today Vedanta is no longer a mere dry intellectual construction for me, no abstract conception; rather it is the highest wisdom of my own Self, an all-embracing expression for all human striving toward truth and light.

What a man once knows he can never forget. And if one knows Vedanta to be the way to the knowledge of the Self, then one reaches the light, just as a cave acquires light when a candle is lighted, even if it has lain in darkness for centuries.

If I ask myself what Vedanta means to me, it is the same as asking the question: What does life mean to me? After having been drawn for five long years through the closest thickets of war madness, I learned that there is not much meaning left except the obligation to struggle, with every breath, for the complete realization of my own Self, which alone is eternal, indestructible, omnipresent, and divine.



# THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

In the history of man's recorded existence on this planet, we have seen the rise and fall of several civilizations. Among them the ancient civilizations of Ur, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Mexico, Nigeria, Greece, and Rome are prominent.

The history of Indian civilization is unique, however, for it has had a continuous development for over forty centuries during which it faced many changes,—social convulsions, political upheavals, repeated attacks from within and without,—all of which it has survived. This marvellous continuity points to its strange vitality and sound instinct for life. It has throughout the ages produced representatives to uphold the glory of its ideal. In this sense Indian civilization is neither old nor new; it is *purāṇa* (*purā api nava eva iti purāṇah*); it is eternal, immortal, and deathless (*mṛtyunjaya*). L. F. Rushbrook Williams writes in his *What About India?*:

'The first thing to realize about India is that it is the home of an ancient, but still *vital* civilization which differs greatly from the civilization of the West. The ancient civilization of Egypt exists only for the archaeologist. That of Sumeria must be uncovered by the excavators. But the civilization of India, in its origins probably as ancient as either, still exists in full flower before our eyes, and is the greatest factor in the lives of people who today number three hundred and fifty millions, one-fifth of the entire population of the world'.

In his *New Lights on the Most Ancient East*, G. Childe writes:

'India confronts Egypt and Babylonia by the third millennium with a thoroughly *individual* and independent civilization of her own, technically the peer of the rest'.

It has not been purely a static civilization, confined to its home with no mission and message, nor has it been purely other-worldly. Indian culture spread widely. This fact has been vividly described by Sylvain Levi, the great French Orientalist:

'From Persia to the Chinese sea, from the icy regions of Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo, from Oceania to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales, and her civilization. She has left indelible imprints on one-fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history the rank that ignorance had refused her for a long time, to hold her place among the great nations, summarizing and symbolizing the spirit of Humanity'.

In the cuneiform inscriptions of the fourteenth century B. C. in Mitanni, a city in Asia Minor, we find mention of Vedic deities like Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and Ashvins. There is great affinity between the scriptures of the Persians and the Vedas. Archaeologists point out that Hindu temples have been unearthed at Anuradhapura in Ceylon, at Borobudur in Java, and Angkor in Cambodia. Sir Aurel Stein has traced Indian settlements and caravan routes through the desert of Central Asia up to the great wall of China. Buddhism crossed Indian borders into Tibet, Burma, and Mongolian countries about the second century B. C. There has been constant and uninterrupted cultural relationship between India and China for a period of six hundred years from the time of Kanishka to Harsha. Many of the Buddhist works, of which the originals are lost, survive in Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan versions.

Indian culture has not only spread in the past but is looked upon as the saving culture of a collapsing human civilization. A large number of great intellectuals of Europe and America in the last two centuries, obsessed by the terrific plight of humanity as the result of scientific materialism, scepticism, positivism, and the anguish of denial, have turned to Indian culture and are influenced by its philosophy, —Vedanta.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See author's article on 'Vedanta—Its Influence on the Changing World' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, Jan. 1951, pp. 46-47.



The philosophy of Indian culture is the corrective to the ills of our age and hence its message is topical. It is a failure of perspective to listen to the voices of the Greek masters Plato and Aristotle, and of European thinkers like Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, and not to the sages and seers of India.<sup>2</sup> Indian culture is essentially spiritual in its objective. The greatest intuition of the spiritual seers of India is the unity of all life and existence in the ultimate Reality, the Brahman or Atman, which is the truth of all existence, its ground and goal, and the core of man's inmost being. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says:

*Eko devah sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhah sarvavyāpi  
sarvabhūtāntarātmā,  
Karmādhyakṣah sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī  
cetā kevalo nirguṇaśca.*

'The one God, hidden in all beings,  
All-pervading, the Inner Soul of all things,  
The Overseer of deeds, in all things abiding,  
The Witness, the sole Thinker, devoid of  
qualities'.

Attaining it is the highest good, the uttermost freedom, and the manifest destiny of man. It is the end of man's evolution, the purpose of his life—(*puruṣāt na param kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parāgatih*).<sup>3</sup>

Spiritual realization is a matter of experience and its truth is self-certifying (*svataḥ-siddha* or *svataḥ-pramāṇa*).<sup>4</sup> We cannot have it at second hand for it is intuitive and not intellectually realized. Religion is a matter of personal experience (*svānubhūti*). Creeds, dogmas, scripture, symbols, and institutions of religion are merely its instruments. The experience of spiritual seers is explained in intellectual terms to us. The different creeds are the several intellectual formulations according to different

<sup>2</sup> S. Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, III. 11. See also Sri Aurobindo's articles on Indian Culture: 'A Reply to Archer's Criticism of Indian Culture' in *Advent*, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the fundamental doctrines of the spiritual religion of India see Aldous Huxley's Introduction to the English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda.

temperaments and expressed in the psychological idiom of the author and the age. The voice is one, the echoes are many. Spiritual experience is progressive and open to all who make a ceaseless effort. The Spirit being conceived under different names, its ultimate nature is not rigidly defined as in dogmatic religions, but stated in clear, non-dogmatic terms.

The sages of India have declared, 'The Real is one, but men call it by many names, imagine it in many ways' (*Ekam sat, viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti*). Also: *Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti* and *Ekam jyotiḥ bahudhā vibhāti*). Such a broad formulation of the religious ideal has been responsible for the characteristic of the tolerance and universal acceptance of the Hindu mind. India has been the home of all religions. This attitude of tolerance and acceptance is not anything artificial but is bound up with Hindu religion; it is an article of its faith. It is this attitude that makes for the progressive, scientific, and rational nature of Hinduism and its universalism. The Hindu mind admits of a 'graduated scale' of interpretation from the most impersonal to the most personal. It does not condemn in harsh terms the religion of the average man and his conceptions, but leads him on to higher ideals and deepens and vitalizes his faith. The Indian mind is conscious of the complexity of human nature. Men differing in their psychological dispositions and intellectual talents need differing conceptions of the Deity.<sup>5</sup> The *Śiva-Mahimna Stotra* says,

*Rucīnām vaicitryāt ṛjukuṭīla nānāpathajūṣām,  
Nṛṇām eko gamyah tvamasi payasāmarnava iva.*

'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee'. The Hindu mind recognizes a plurality of the manifestations of one and the same Spirit. The entire absence of spiritual 'totalitarianism' is responsible for this rich variety in the Hindu pantheon.

The seers of India did not reduce the rich

<sup>5</sup> Aldous Huxley: *The Perennial Philosophy*, Ch. VIII; *Religion and Temperament*, pp. 168 ff.



content of religious life into an empty single formula in the name of philosophical reason. They purified religion by making it subserve the Spirit. They held the opinion that rites, vows, ceremonies, modes of worship, ways of sacrifice, and various institutions are as instruments helping us in attaining spiritual realization. According to Hindu sages, religion becomes a reality only when it answers to the complete spiritual needs of men, not if it merely satisfies the rational part of life and the intellectuals of society. It must have a hope for all and respond to the needs of the entire man.

Freedom is the supreme law of spiritual life. Not only 'all things that have been rightly said by all prophets are ours' but all roads lead to Rome. Indian culture looks upon other faiths as the fellow-seekers of Truth and hence is not for aggressive propaganda or conversion. The Hindu is not for active proselytism but for the deepening of others' religion. Hence we do not have in India the religious wars characteristic of dogmatic theologies.

Broadly three methods of God realization are indicated—the way of knowledge, the way of devotion, and the way of works—depending on temperament, but all leading to the same goal<sup>6</sup>. Each individual is given a definite way of life suited to his temperament and abilities, but all are expected to keep up a general morality which insists on the following virtues: non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving (of gifts etc.). The *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patanjali lay down these as the universal great vows (*sārvabhaumā-mahāvratam*) that are to be practised by all irrespective of time, place, purpose, and caste rules. Besides this, every individual is assigned to a caste which is determined by not his birth but his qualities and tendencies. He has to observe the laws and duties of his caste. The fourfold caste system was not the rigid and

unmeaningful thing that it is today, stiffened into a fixed hierarchy without purity and utility, unintended by the originators of this great educational formula. What obtains today is a mere parody of the original. Many are inclined to describe it as an economic adjustment or a sort of guild system for the maintenance of society. But its intention is to help each individual to develop to the full in his own place by doing his duties with a spiritual attitude. As the *Gita* puts it:

*Yatah pravṛttirbhūtānām, yena sarvamidam  
tatam,  
Svakarmanā tamabhyarcya siddhim vindati  
mānavah.*

'From whom is the evolution of all beings, by whom all this (universe) is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, a man attains Perfection'.

The Hindu scheme of society is organic, co-ordinating all activity, helping man to realize the Highest, not only for the good of himself but that of society also. To awaken the spiritual in man and to humanize him are its objectives. Ill-informed critics are of the opinion that Indian culture is ascetic and other-worldly. They hold that Indian culture is world-negating, life-denying, and static. This is all a one-sided picture and not true to facts. Hinduism, the culture of India, is not other-worldly. It does say that this life is good if you know enough to understand the purpose of life. It maintains that this life is good, but it is only a means to an end. Hinduism is a dynamic, pragmatic, and spiritual power which inspires man to rise higher and enlarge his vision. It has taken note of the natural motives, passions, and instincts of man and regulated them. It aims at evolving a civilization which is 'naturally productive, socially just, aesthetically beautiful, and spiritually integral'. The arts and architecture, drama and poetry, and institutions and ways of life of the Hindus are all integrated and their civilization is progressive, rational, and humane. It is a great mistake for some of our youth, particularly the intellectuals, to despair of India and say that she is played out. It is a fallacious generalization to judge

<sup>6</sup> See Swami Vivekananda's lectures and writings on the four Yogas: *Jñāna Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and *Rāja Yoga*. (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora).



India from recent history, for it is a very ancient civilization which has a message for all times and is not without one for our age. Lord Acton has remarked somewhere that to emphasize the three hundred years' failure of a nation, ignoring its three thousand years' success, is to study history from a wrong pers-

pective. Indian culture is not a country without a capital, nor is it a formless lump of creeds and sects with no central doctrine to hold them. It is a citadel with a ring of outworks, intricate but interrelated. The outworks are being added to and altered from time to time.

## A SAINT AND A SINNER

BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA

*(Continued from the January issue)*

It was not enough for Surendra to enshrine the Master in the temple of his heart and enjoy his elevating presence all alone—he wanted others also to share the fruit of his discovery. So his house became a veritable centre of attraction for the devotees, graced as it very often was by the presence of Sri Ramakrishna, who had the greatest affection for Suren and even went there of his own accord. It was in this house that Swami Vivekananda, then the boy Narendranath, met the Master for the first time. Surendra had invited the Master and the devotees sometime in the middle of 1881, and feeling the need of a good musician to entertain them, had called Narendra who lived in the same quarter of Calcutta. Again on 27th October 1882, the Master went to Suren's house after a pleasant trip on the Ganges which he had in a steam-boat along with Keshab Sen and his Brahmo followers. Getting down from the boat he entered a carriage, with some devotees, to go back to Dakshineswar. It was evening and the full moon was up. When they came near Surendra's house, the Master decided to get down. But Surendra was not at home. The members of the household opened a room for the party. The cab fare had to be paid. Surendra would have taken care of it if he

had been there. What was to be done now? When the question was referred to the Master he said, unhesitatingly, with a smile, 'Why don't you ask the ladies to pay the fare. They certainly know that their master visits us at Dakshineswar. I am not a stranger to them'. No, he was not a stranger, particularly when he refused to be so in his devotee's house! He sat comfortably and sent some one to bring Narendra. Narendra came and the Master went on talking. But as the night advanced and still Surendra did not return, he decided to leave for Dakshineswar.

It is not possible at this distance of time to ascertain how many times the Master blessed that house by his presence, invited or uninvited; but it must have been very often. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* tells us of only a few occasions. Some of them have already been referred to. We also know that the Master, with the devotees, visited Surendra's garden at Kāṅkūrgāchhi on invitation on 15th June 1884, when the house and the garden echoed and re-echoed with God's name. The Master here praised Surendra saying, 'Where is Surendra? What a nice disposition he has now! He is very outspoken, he is not afraid to say the truth.



He is unstinting in his liberality. No one that goes to him for help, comes away empty-handed'.<sup>8</sup> Earlier than this on 26th December 1883, the Master, with other devotees, visited this garden when returning from Ramachandra Datta's new garden in the neighbourhood. The Master that day talked with a Sadhu there, took some refreshments, and then set out for Dakshineswar.<sup>9</sup> On 15th April 1883, he visited Surendra's house in Calcutta, on the eve of the worship of the Goddess Annapurna. The Master arrived there at six o'clock in the evening and after bowing down before the image in the hall went to the open courtyard, where he sat on a carpet amidst his devotees and talked on things divine. When *kīrtan* began, he went into deep Samādhi. After regaining consciousness he joined in the song with the professionals and danced, thinking himself to be a milkmaid of Vrindaban gone mad with the beauty of Sri Krishna's form.<sup>10</sup> In the previous year, on 19th November, too, he visited Surendra's house on the occasion of the Jagaddhātri Puja.<sup>11</sup>

If the Master's love for Surendra (or Suresh, as he called him) was unbounded, it was never blind. The Master's vigilant eyes ever detected the shortcomings and applied the brake without faltering. Surendra was one day recounting before the Master and the devotees how he was pestered for money by the priests and beggars at Vrindaban when he went there on a pilgrimage, and how to avoid them he gave them the impression that he would leave for Calcutta the next day, while he actually left that very day. The Master at once rebuked him for that falsehood. Surendra, to save himself from that awkward situation, tried to give a turn to the topic by saying that he had seen many Vaishnava Sadhus at Vrindaban engaged in meditation far away from human habitation. The Master wanted to know if he had offered

them anything. 'No', said Surendra. 'You did wrong', corrected the Master, 'one should offer something to Sadhus and devotees. Those who have money should give something to such people when they come across them'.

We have seen how through a mystic experience in his shrine Surendra became a believer; but mystic experiences which come suddenly take time to permeate the nooks and corners of everyday life. And though the intrinsic worth of the original realization remains unsullied, past habits of thought have repeatedly to be reoriented. Surendra's mind was full of the wonted ideas of reasonableness—he overlooked the element of natural irregularities that make the world what it is. Thus he said one day (2nd March 1884), 'God is just. He must look after His devotees'; but the Master corrected him saying, 'This world is God's Maya; and there are many confusing things in this realm of Maya—one cannot comprehend them. The ways of God are inscrutable indeed!' So Suren gave up the attempt of understanding, he now rather wanted to share in the ineffable joy of love, freed from the vain worries of life. But when such an inspiration comes first, one goes to extremes. In the first flush of God intoxication Surendra, too, wanted to cut himself adrift from the world partially at least. The Master taught, 'Why should you give up? Give up mentally. Live unattached in the world'. But Surendra wanted to spend the night at Dakshineswar occasionally. The Master recounted once, 'He brought a bed and even spent a day or two here. Then his wife said to him, "You may go anywhere you like during the daytime, but at night you must not leave home"'. What could poor Surendra do? Now he has no way of spending the night away from home'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless Surendra's mind hankered more and more for spiritual communion and the Master, too, endearingly offered him facilities. One evening at nine o'clock (17th April 1886), Surendra came and offered flowers and garlands to the Master, who put

<sup>8</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* It was on 26th December 1883.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



the garland on his neck and made a sign to Surendra to come near him. When the disciple drew near the bed, Sri Ramakrishna took the garland from his neck and put it around Surendra's. Surendra saluted the Master. Sri Ramakrishna asked him by a sign, to rub his feet. Surendra gave them a gentle massage. Surendra was almost in an ecstatic mood. He sang:

'Crazy is my Father, crazy my Mother,  
And I, their son, am crazy too!'<sup>13</sup>

This reminds us of an equally touching scene during the Durga Puja of 1885, when the Master was in his sick-bed at Shyampukur in Calcutta. Surendra had worshipped the Mother in an earthen image. On the eve of immersion of the image on the 18th October, he ran to the Master, unable to bear the thought of the impending separation. Arrived there, the disconsolate devotee was crying to the Divine Mother and talking to Her. 'At this yearning of his beloved disciple, Sri Ramakrishna could not control his tears. He looked at 'M.' and said in a choked voice, "What Bhakti! Ah, what great love he feels for God!" (To Surendra)—"Yesterday evening at seven or seven-thirty I saw your worship hall in a vision. I saw the divine image full of effulgence. This place and your hall were joined by a stream of light flowing between them". Surendra: "At that time I was crying to the Mother in the worship hall. I thought, the Mother said, I will come again".'<sup>14</sup>

We have followed the relationship between Surendra and the Master mostly from the human point of view. But the Master often hinted that Surendra was one of the suppliers of his needs (*rasad-dār*), whom Mother had fixed for him and whom She showed to him in a vision. According to *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, they were five in number and all had fair complexion. In *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Leelaprasanga* Swami Saradananda gives a slightly different version: 'The Mother of the universe showed to him (the Master) that

four persons had been sent down for the supply of provisions. The Master said that of these four, Mathuranath, the son-in-law of Rani Rasmany, was the first, and Shambhu Mallik was the second. Surendra Mitra of Simulia (whom the Master sometimes called Surendra or sometimes Suresh) was a half-supplier, that is to say, Surendra was not a full supplier. . . . Soon after coming to Dakshineswar, Surendra or Suresh Mitra used to bear the expenses for the food and beddings for all the devotees who came to stay with the Master for serving him'.

No adequate record of the liberality of Surendra has been preserved; but from the hints gathered from the pages of the past, one cannot resist the conclusion that his expenditure for the Master and his disciples was quite considerable for a man of his means. As a proof of this, we have the very suggestive remark of Sri Ramakrishna, 'You give away more than you earn'. Before the Master went to the Cossipore garden-house for treatment, he did not like to live on the subscription of the poor devotees. So he summoned his two intimate '*rasad-dārs*'—Surendra and Balaram. He asked Surendra to pay the monthly rent which was Rs. 80, and Balaram to supply his diet. Both agreed with alacrity; but Surendra went still further; he not only rented the house in his own name, he also bore the greater part of the total expense which was well over Rs. 200 every month. Besides, he did not like others to encroach on his domain. When once the young devotees tried to raise some money from others, he became very cross with them and would not talk or sit near them—even Narendra could not escape his wrath. In addition to this monthly contribution he brought many things personally—it might be a cooling screen or some flowers and garlands, or some such other titbits. From a letter of Swami Vivekananda (dated 26th May 1890) we also know that Surendra contributed Rs. 1,000 for purchasing a plot on the Ganges for laying at rest the earthly remains of the Master.

In addition, Surendra tried in his own

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



way to give tangible expression and currency to the message of the Master. Thus he prepared a picture suggestive of the harmony of religions. At one end of the picture there are a Hindu temple, a Christian church, and a Mohammedan mosque, before which the saints of different religions are dancing with delight, and at the other end Sri Ramakrishna stands by Keshab Chandra pointing out to the latter the effect of the Master's message. Keshab was highly pleased to see this picture and congratulated Surendra for this marvellous conception. Surendra also prepared an emblem of harmony in which the symbols of various religions got fused. Keshab Chandra once used it in one of his processions. Another contribution of Surendra was the inauguration of the birthday anniversary of the Master. In the Bengali book *Bhakta Manomohan*, Manomohan says, 'Through Surendra's efforts and financial help the birthday anniversary of the Master was inaugurated in 1881. A few of us, devotees, gathered that day for the celebration under the Panchavati. Surendra bore all the expenses for the first and the second celebration; from the third year the other devotees of the Master also began to add their contributions, though Surendra still continued to be the moving spirit of the festivity—and it was he who defrayed the major portion of the expenditure'.

The greatest achievement of Surendra was the start he gave to the Ramakrishna Math, which makes him immortal in the history of the Movement. After the passing away of the Master the garden-house at Cossipore had to be vacated. Most of the young disciples then returned home and resumed studies. But some of them, e.g. Latu, Tarak, Gopal the elder, and Kālī, either did not like to do so or had no place to go to; so they went on pilgrimage or moved hither and thither in search of a shelter. At this time Surendra had a vision of the Master, who entered his shrine and chastised him saying, 'What are you doing? My children are roaming the streets—first set that right!' Surendra at once ran to Narendra's house like a madman and after

narrating the whole incident said, 'Brother, fix upon some place where the Master's picture can be installed, his ashes and his things can be preserved, daily worship can be carried on, and where we can go now and then to be free from the worries of the world. I shall pay the same amount as I did at Cossipore'. Narendra was overjoyed at the offer, and through intense search secured a dilapidated house near the Ganges, at Baranagore, belonging to the Munshis. The monthly rent was Rs. 10. Thus in September-October (Aswin) 1886, the first Ramakrishna Math came into existence.<sup>15</sup> Surendra paid Rs. 30 per month for the first two months. But as the number of inmates went up, the contribution was gradually raised to Rs. 100 per month. 'M.', an eye-witness, bears testimony to Surendra's large-heartedness thus: 'Surendra was indeed a blessed soul. It was he who laid the foundation of the great Order later associated with Sri Ramakrishna's name. His devotion and sacrifice made it possible for those earnest souls to renounce the world for the realization of God. Through him Sri Ramakrishna made it possible for them to live in the world as embodiments of his teachings—the renunciation of "woman and gold" and realization of God. The brothers lived at the Math like

<sup>15</sup> Sri Shashi Bhushan Ghose in his *Sri Ramakrishna Deva* (published in 1925) gives a different version: 'The devotee Suresh Chandra rented the Cossipore garden-house for Rs. 80 per month. But he had also to shoulder the greater portion of the expenses for attendance on the Master. When the Master passed away . . . a difficulty stood in the way of releasing the house. Sometime earlier Surendra had got an oil painting of his chosen deity Kālī prepared for his own home. But owing to the terrible features of the deity in the painting, the people at home advised Surendra not to keep it there. So he kept it at Cossipore in the Master's room. Now he had to find a new place for it, since he could not take it home'. According to this author this was the real cause of the founding of the Baranagore monastery; the young devotees could be entrusted with the terrible picture. It strikes us that though this might have been a secondary cause, it could not certainly be the chief motive; for, a man of resources like Surendra could have disposed of it otherwise without incurring a heavy monthly expenditure.



orphan boys. Sometimes they would not have the money to pay their house-rent; sometimes they would have no food in the monastery. Surendra would come and settle all these things. He was the big brother of the monks. Later on, when they thought of his genuine love, the members of this first Math shed tears of gratitude'.<sup>16</sup>

Not only the first inmates, but we their followers too, are conscious of our deep gratitude to Surendra and we cherish his memory with love and warmth. Our only regret is

<sup>16</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

that not much of his wonderful life has been preserved on which our minds can dwell. Perhaps the Master did not want his 'suppliers' to be too well known to posterity. Mathur and Shambhu passed away before the first devotees began to gather round the Master. Surendra and Balaram followed the Master soon after his departure, before the next generation could see them. Surendra breathed his last on the night of 25th May 1890, only a few days after Balaram.

(Concluded)

## HAS RELIGION DECLINED IN INDIA?

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

No religion has escaped the fate of all religions—nay, of all human institutions—i.e. decay and decline which however could be arrested and negated by a deep fervour of faith (*śraddhā*). The *Gita* says that the real man within the apparent man is *śraddhā* (*śraddhāmayoyam puruṣo yo yat śraddhah sa eva saḥ*). But faith declines after the first flush of the initial fervour of the world faith in the times of the founder of the faith. No religion escapes the fate of institutionalization. A church is inevitable to give form and clarity to a faith but its rigidity is often the grave of the faith. The later leaders and exponents of the faith often keep up the forms of the faith and miss its essence. The letter killeth the spirit.

We must realize also that after science killed superstition and the new industrial revolution brought in the machine age along with a new intensified materialism, the centre of man's interests has been shifted from the other world to this world. I do not mean to say that there is or should be any conflict between this world and the next. So long as birth and death are there, the visions of a

future life and the other world will be there. But what I do say is that when there is a keen hunger for creature comforts and people begin to take more interest in politics than in religion, the horizon of the other world will begin to recede. Swami Vivekananda once said that the future will witness not the fight of one world faith with another but the fight of all religions with unfaith and materialism, and advised all the religions to make common cause against their common foe.

Thus these anti-religious forces have caused some decline in Hinduism as in other religions. But Hinduism has had also special and peculiar causes for decline and it is meet that we consider them. In other religions also we find certain historical and doctrinal vagaries that have led to a similar decline. Each of such religions has dealt with such causes of decline in its own way. So has Hinduism done with the decline within its realm.

One special cause of decline is stated by critics within and without as being the caste system. So much has been said for and against the system of caste that one feels be-



wildered by the prejudice and passion exhibited on both sides. The fourfold organization of Hindu society was based on the ideal of mutual interdependence and service and conserved the hereditary factor without breaking innate originality and talent which should be available in an unimpeded manner for the service of society and the State which is the supreme institution in society. In the Dharma Shastras the factor of character is as much stressed as the factor of birth. But in course of time the latter factor was stressed too much, and further sub-castes went on branching out under every conceivable urge—professional, sectarian, geographical, linguistic, and what not—till at last the Hindu community became a loose bundle of mutually jealous and antagonistic sub-groups, each of which went its way, scornful of the others, leaving the whole to be reduced to political slavery and economic exploitation. Buddhism came in as an explosive movement of revolt and later on Islam and Christianity have assaulted the very citadel of Hinduism. The number of converts from the lower strata of the Hindu community to the new faiths became very large. But the inner jealousies which were rampant in the Hindu fold made it impotent to resist mass conversions. Further, Hinduism has never been a proselytizing religion and its theory of Hindutva by birth was an anti-proselytizing force. The result has been that Hinduism could never swell in numbers but has been steadily losing its numerical strength. It must, however, be pointed out that two very powerful forces have been operative within Hinduism to arrest the internal rot and decay. One of them is an ancient potency, while the other is of recent origin and growth. The Bhakti movement all over India, during the last one thousand years and more, has brought in a new social concord to overpower the forces of social discord. Further, the new nationalism, which seeks to unite India as a free and unified and powerful country, has also let loose new forces of concord. There is also a growing passion for reconversion of the converts

lost by Hinduism to other faiths in the land. Sikhism, Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophy, etc. have each contributed a little in the direction of rousing the passion of social concord and equality. The movement which has done most to fuse together the best social and spiritual ideals and institutions of the past with the new forces operative in the present age is, perhaps, the Ramakrishna Mission.

Another potent cause of weakness and decline is the custom of untouchability. It is a misreading of history to attribute it to priestcraft. It is a historical legacy which has been weighing like a millstone round the neck of the Hindu community. Man's inhumanity to man has been disfiguring our planet in the five continents and on the seven seas. The lynching whites of U.S.A., the slave-traders of not very distant epochs, the colour maniacs of South Africa, and other cruel inhuman human enemies of humanity need not hold up their hands very high in holy horror against the cruel and silly custom of untouchability whose effects have been comparatively mild in India. The custom of untouchability and the mixing up of untouchability with religion have been two of our grave spiritual errors. The present social passion in the direction of Harijan uplift is not a new thing in India. In the times of Ramanuja—nay, even in pre-Ramanuja days—the gospel of the spiritual equality of all and of the possibility of sainthood among Harijans as amongst other groups was well known in India. But Mahatma Gandhi gave the movement a social force and a spiritual passion which were unknown before. On the whole it must be said that untouchability as a special cause of decline in Hinduism is an arrested cause, though much yet remains to be done by way of Hindu social and spiritual unification.

Apart from these institutional defects, there have been a few psychological defects which have led to decline in Hinduism. One of them is the concept of Ahimsa which is in itself and by itself the highest of human concepts. Eschewing violence as an instru-



ment of oppression and exploitation is one thing—a noble thing. But giving up violence merely because of fear of pain and submitting to violence in a spirit of total non-resistance is another thing—an ignoble thing. The term 'mild Hindu' is often used partly in derision to describe the latter mentality. Total non-resistance as a saintly vow is all right, especially when it is practised to the extent of rousing the human will-power to that sublimated altitude wherein it can cow down and hypnotize all evil and violence and compel the lion to lie down with the lamb and make the tiger and the cow drink at the same spring. But that is for the supreme Yogi and saint. Ordinary folk, who have not renounced everything, have no right to renounce righteous force in self-defence.

It must be admitted also that the doctrines of Karma and Maya have been misinterpreted and misapplied to breed fatalism and indifference within the Hindu society. It must be said also that very often the other world has overshadowed the interests of this world. But the blame for the decline, consequent on these wrong ideologies, must rest not on Hinduism but on the misapplications and perversions of Hinduism. The doctrine of Karma merely shows that there is a law of

moral causality and that we are what we have made ourselves to be. But if we have made, we can unmake. If some forces have bound us, there are other forces which can set us free. The Spirit of man is in its essence infinite freedom and power and bliss. God is desirous of helping us to get out of bondage and to achieve liberation. Similarly Maya means that this world is a finite world, a world of birth and death, a world of lights and shadows—a world which is but an inn and not an eternal home. It does not mean that we must keep the inn dirty or let it become an unweeded jungle. Nay, our fitness for liberation and emancipation depends on our establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

Thus many causes have been acting in the direction of generating decline in Hinduism, but they are also being arrested by the mobilization of counter forces. The Islamic ideal of brotherhood and the Christian concept of active philanthropy and service have intensified similar inherent trends within Hinduism. All these world religions must form a league of mutual aid instead of operating in the direction of mutual attack, and must come to terms with one another and with science, in the interests of human unity, human freedom, and human happiness.

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## GITA AND YOGA-VASISHTHA

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

(Continued from the January issue)

In the Mumukshu Prakarana, with which practically Vasishtha's series of illuminating lectures commences, he repudiates the general idea prevailing over the minds of the weak people of the world, viz. that man is a slave to *daiva* (fate), that his destiny is governed by some supernatural force beyond his control. Vasishtha establishes with cogent argu-

ments that man's *puruṣakāra* is far superior to what is called *daiva*, that *daiva* conceived as a supernatural power governing human destinies does not really exist, that man is the sole master of his own destinies, that man, by dint of his own well planned and well regulated efforts, has to build up his own character and realize the ideals of his



life, and that *daiva*, in the true sense of the term, is nothing but what he has earned in his past life or lives as the result of his own voluntary deeds, and what, therefore, naturally and morally exercises considerable influence and thus puts limitations upon his present life. Vasishtha asserts that man, by the proper exercise of his freedom of thought, freedom of choice, freedom of efforts, can override the influence of the *daiva* created by himself in the past and march forward for the attainment of the supreme good of life. But what is the supreme good of life? This also he has himself to discover by the effort of his thinking power. But for the enlightenment of his thinking power, he has freely and voluntarily to take the help and place himself, in the earlier stages, under the expert guidance of the judgment and experience of enlightened persons. He has to mould and develop and illumine his own power of judgment in accordance with the light obtained from the Shastras, the Guru, and the sages. He must rise above self-diffidence, above all sense of weakness and despondency, above all sense of helplessness and subservience to fate in the world. Through self-effort he must overcome all difficulties and advance in life.

Vasishtha strongly emphasizes the necessity of the development and refinement of man's *vicāra-śakti*—the power of unprejudiced, uncorrupted, independent judgment. The judgment must not be vitiated by the influence of desires and passions, habits and customs, popular opinions and unenlightened traditions, temperamental narrowness and bigotry, and other social or political or economic forces. As the power of judgment is developed and refined, man becomes more and more convinced of the intrinsic glory of his Atman, he realizes more and more deeply and clearly that the Atman transcends his body and senses, transcends the passing thoughts, emotions, and desires of his mind, transcends the joys and sorrows of the psychophysical organism, transcends all the limitations and all the changes of his physical and

psychical embodiments. He gradually realizes that the infinite, eternal, birthless, deathless, changeless, pure self-luminous Spirit—*cit*—is his true Self, and all births and deaths, all changes and limitations, all bondages and sorrows are illusory appearances with reference to this *cit-ātmā*.

All these illusions inscrutably appear and disappear in the presence of the Atman. They are revealed by its light, as it alone is self-luminous. They have no existence apart from it, as it alone is self-existent. It is their eternal witness, eternal illuminer. But it is never in the least affected by their appearances and disappearances. What is called the objective world is related to the mind. The mind receives and feels and acts upon the diversities of the objective world, and the functions of the mind are the only evidence of the existence of such a world. It is only in terms of the mental modifications that the phenomena of the world are and can possibly be described. Hence the objective world can aptly be conceived as essentially *mano-maya* (constituted of mind). The world of diversities and changes exists in, by, and for the mind. If the mind ceases to function, the world vanishes. But the mind with all the objects of its cognitive, emotional, and volitional experiences exists by and for the Atman. The Atman is the only self-existent, self-shining *draṣṭā* (seer, illuminer, revealer), while the mind and all the objects of its experience constituting the world order are *drśya* (seeable, illuminable, revealable), having relative contingent existence only with reference to the *draṣṭā*. The *draṣṭā* is the eternally self-existent, self-luminous *adhiṣṭhāna* (substratum) and all the *drśya*—all the plurality of subjects and objects of experience—are only appearances on and to the substratum, revealed to and by it, having a continuous flow of apparent existence. The Absolute Reality is thus the one Spirit, and the world of plurality is nothing but a continuous stream of apparent realities. This being the character of the objective world, it cannot impose any real limitation upon the Atman, it cannot be a real source of bondage to the



Atman, it cannot in any way vitiate the self-luminous, self-fulfilled, infinite, eternal, free, and blissful nature of the Atman. The questions as to the *why* and the *how* of these appearances are altogether irrelevant, inasmuch as such questions arise only in the empirical mind with reference to the objects of its own experience and have relevancy only in connection with the phenomena of the objective world (including the functions of the individual mind itself). These appearances never began to appear at any point of time, (time also being within this system of appearances), and hence the questions as to when they began to appear, why they began to appear, and how they began to appear are all meaningless. Further, these appearances constituting the world order will never cease to appear in time. The Atman, the *adhiṣṭhāna*, is above time and space,—is the *adhiṣṭhāna* of time and space, while the system of appearances extends over all time and space,—it is, therefore, a beginningless and endless order. Accordingly the appearances constituting the world will never die out, will never cease to have their apparent existence. It is only by *vicāra* that man can realize this transcendent nature of the Atman.

Vasishtha establishes this truth by adducing countless logical arguments, by giving innumerable illustrations, by presenting various similes and analogies, and by citing a good many authorities. At many stages, during the long discourse, Sri Rama, with his extraordinarily developed rational intellect, raises relevant objections, advances counter-arguments, puts forward newer and newer problems, and demands clarifications of the Guru's assertions. The Guru sometimes finds it difficult to satisfy the disciple. He has to review almost all other possible view-points. Vasishtha, having the realization of the complete Truth, successfully removes the veil of ignorance and one-sided knowledge from the mind of the truth-seeker, and illumines his whole being with the light of complete Truth.

But what should be the proper application of Truth realization in the practical life of a

man? In answer to Rama's query, Vasishtha places before him the active life of a Jivanmukta as the true ideal. A man who realizes the complete Truth about the Self and the world order in this life and who in his practical life gives expression to this Truth realization is called a Jivanmukta. Should a Jivanmukta give up all worldly works and live a life of total asceticism and continuous meditation on the Absolute Truth? Or should he perform the worldly duties—domestic, social, political, and humanitarian duties—as they appear before him and as they may be demanded from him by the worldly environments? Can a Jivanmukta have any duty at all? Can there be a reconciliation between Truth realization and practical work in this world?

This is a puzzling problem to philosophers and religious men in general. If Truth realization means the knowledge that the Atman alone is the Absolute Reality, that the world of diversities has only an illusory appearance but no reality in the true sense of the term, that family, society, state, humanity, etc. are only fictions of the mind to which the Truth is veiled, then how can a man having attained the knowledge of the Absolute Truth devote himself to the performance of works in this illusory world? How can he have any sense of duty? This sense of duty owes its origin to the false idea of differences and varieties of relations between man and man, the idea of differences of values with regard to worldly actions and achievements, the idea of the validity of man's worldly experiences, etc. Moreover, work is merely a means to the attainment of a desirable but unattained object,—a means to the realization of an unrealized ideal. If a man knows that his Atman is in truth infinite and eternal, naturally pure and blissful and perfect, that he has no unrealized ideal to realize, that he has nothing to gain from the world or to give to the world, how can he have any inclination to work? Hence an actionless life, enjoying within the consciousness the infinite joy of the knowledge of the transcendent



nature of the Atman, ought to be the normal character of a Jivanmukta.

But Vasishtha does not accept this conclusion. He points out that a man who has attained complete knowledge of the Truth has no reason to regard the life of contemplation and meditation and Samādhi as superior or preferable to the life of action in this world. The former mode of life may have certain advantages over the latter, and the latter certain disadvantages and difficulties. But all questions of advantages and disadvantages are matters of worldly considerations. The inner enjoyment of the life of meditation is as much a worldly phenomenon as the troubles to be faced in the life of action. The desire for the continuous enjoyment of the blissful state of consciousness in Samadhi is no less a desire (*vāsanā*) of an individual mind than the desire for earthly pleasure. A Jivanmukta, in his inner consciousness, rises above the illusory sense of individuality and realizes the identity of his own Self with the Self of all beings—the Self of the universe. To his illumined consciousness joys and sorrows of individual life are all the same, just as life and death are all the same. Since the phenomenal world has only an illusory existence, the individual life also has an illusory existence, its *bandha* and *mokṣa*, *sādhana* and *siddhi*, *karma* and *sannyāsa*,—all these have illusory existences. From the view-point of the Atman, he has nothing to gain and nothing to abandon, no particular mode of life can have any special attraction for him, *karma* and *akarma* are equally palatable to him. Being inwardly untouched by the ways of the world and the individual life, he gladly accepts whatever course of life naturally presents itself to him. Action and inaction being equally delightful

to him, he gladly and enthusiastically performs the actions which his family or society or the Shastras offer to him as his duties.

A man of true knowledge may not create any duties for himself, because he has no special interest in or desire for anything in this world. But while he is living in this world with a human body, mind, and intellect, he has no reason for attempting to shirk the duties which the world thrusts upon or entrusts to his individual body, mind, and intellect. His body, mind, and intellect belong to this phenomenal world, they are part and parcel of this world, and this world may take any services from them. A Jivanmukta ungrudgingly renders such services, with his inner consciousness perfectly detached from them and wholly unconcerned about the consequences of these worldly actions.

Vasishtha demonstrates the possibility of this harmony between Truth realization and the due performance of worldly duties by citing many noble examples, such as Janaka, Shikhidhvaja, Chudāla, and others. Sri Rama is perfectly satisfied. His sadness is gone. He learns to look upon the world and the individual life in a new light. His *vairāgya* is now elevated to a much higher spiritual plane, and it no longer appears incompatible with his royal duties. He is now fully prepared to devote himself to whatever duties his position in society and his physical, mental, and intellectual equipment may render imperative upon him.

Thus though the *Gita* and the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* adopt different lines of philosophical argumentation, they arrive at the same practical conclusion, viz. the life of perfect harmony between Jnana and Karma.

(Concluded)



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In a superb sonnet sequence the devoted poet pays a fitting offering *To Sri Ramakrishna* whose birthday anniversary falls this month, on the 27th to be precise. . . .

Art in India has a long and great past, not unknown to every lover of aesthetics throughout the world. Yet, there is not a little misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Indian art motifs, especially among non-Indian connoisseurs. Dr. Nandalal Chatterji of the University of Lucknow aptly and lucidly expounds *The Meaning of Indian Art Motifs*, laying due emphasis on the aesthetic, ethical, and metaphysical aspects of Indian art. . . .

Mr. Kurt Friedrichs of Hamburg (Germany), a youthful and ardent student of Vedanta, relates some outstanding personal experiences of his in 'What Vedanta Means to Me'. . . .

*Has Religion Declined in India?* A question for serious consideration and investigation, no doubt. Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, the well known scholar and writer, discusses this important point and tells the Hindus as well as their critics some home truths.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD HINDU?

Writing under the above title, in the *Vedanta and the West*, Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York has presented in a nutshell the main principles of Hinduism which every good Hindu believes in. He writes:

'A good Hindu believes in the reality and oneness of God, who is the power that creates and preserves the universe, and unto whom it periodically returns. God has many aspects. Some regard him as personal, some as personal but not human, and some as entirely impersonal. He is the eternal Spirit, birthless and deathless, and the repository of infinite blessed qualities. Some Hindus commune with God through appropriate images, and some in a direct manner, without help of any symbol. As the Saviour of humanity, God manifests himself in times of human crisis as incarnations like

Buddha, Krishna, and Christ. A good Hindu accepts prophets and incarnations outside his own religious tradition. God is immanent in the universe. He dwells in all beings as life and consciousness. Through his grace man is liberated from the bondage and suffering of life'.

'A good Hindu believes in the divinity of the soul. Each soul is potentially divine, and the purpose of religion is to manifest its divinity. Man, in his true nature, is completely separate from his body and mind, which are subject to change; he is the Spirit, which is immutable, eternal, pure, and perfect. For some reason, inscrutable to the finite mind, the infinite Spirit becomes individualized and assumes a finite body. Evil actions contract or hide the soul's natural purity, and good actions bring it out. Every soul will ultimately attain to liberation. A sinner has a future, as a saint has a past. What is called sin is but a passing phase of man's evolution towards his God-like nature'.

'A good Hindu believes that religion does not consist in merely believing a particular creed or dogma. Religion is the realization of God. To know God is to be like God. In this very life a man can completely subdue his baser passions and manifest his higher nature.

'To a good Hindu the universe is a unity in diversity. The various names and forms are in reality one existence. They are like the waves of the ocean. A man's relationship with others should be based upon this truth. To a good Hindu all lives are sacred. The majority of Hindus are vegetarians. The golden rule in Hinduism is that one should not do unto others what one does not expect others to do unto oneself.

'A good Hindu believes in the harmony of religions. God is one, but he is known by various names. The diverse religions are so many paths to reach one and the same God consciousness. There are different religions to suit different tastes and temperaments. Unflinching devotion to his own faith and unbounded respect for others' faiths are the watchwords of the genuine Hindu. He believes that there are different ways to commune with God. Perfection can be attained through selfless service to others; through love of God that neither seeks return nor knows fear; through philosophical discrimination between the real and the unreal, and renunciation of the unreal; and finally, through self-control and concentration. A particular discipline is chosen according to a man's inborn nature.

'To a good Hindu our worldly pursuits and social life are not ends in themselves, but means



to the attainment of freedom. Hinduism accepts the fact that men are born with unequal mental and physical characteristics, which are determined by their past actions. But it emphasizes that everyone should be helped to develop his highest potentiality. The social laws of the Hindus have been formulated with that end in view. Four ideals have been laid down which every normal human being should strive for. These are ethical virtues, economic security, legitimate experience of life in the world, and communion with the eternal. The first three pave the way to the acquisition of the last, which alone is the highest good. A Hindu believes in the caste system, which is based on the natural inequality of men at birth. The four castes represent spiritual power, physical valour, wealth, and manual labour. They are interdependent. It is sinful for one caste to exploit another or for the strong to repress the weak. All should work in harmony for the common welfare of society. Life is likewise divided, in Hinduism, into four stages. The first stage should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge; the second to family life and service to society; the third to reflection on spiritual truths in solitude; and the last to uninterrupted contemplation of God through renunciation of worldly attachments.

'To a good Hindu the great God is our common Father, his creative energy our benign Mother, the world our home, and all God-fearing people, regardless of their caste or creed, our kith and kin'.

Hinduism is the general name by which is known the ancient faith of India professed by hundreds of millions of people for thousands

of years. It is no other than the universal religion derived from the Vedas (*vaidika-dharma*) and based on the eternal verities that have sustained and nourished human society down the ages (*sanātana-dharma*). But, unfortunately, owing to reasons that are well known in India, the terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' have latterly been given an erroneous communal and parochial colouring. Even at a time when the inspired communal tension was at its height, good Hindus and good Muslims were not wanting. When Mahatma Gandhi was touring the riot-affected areas, he repeatedly asked for the services of one good and sincere Hindu and one good and sincere Muslim in 'each village in order to restore communal amity among the people. In ending communal tension, Gandhiji rightly placed his highest hopes in the sincerity of good Hindus and good Muslims than in big schemes and committees or in the police and the military. India is the motherland of millions of Muslims and many more millions of Hindus. What is needed is that every Hindu and every Muslim should strive to become a good Indian whose character is ideal, whose patriotism is above class or communal feeling, and who can radiate peace and joy within as well as without the social group to which he may happen to belong.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BUDDHIST INDIA. BY T. W. RHYS-DAVIDS. Published by Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., 52/9, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta—12. Pages 254 and 28 Plates.

This is a reprint—and the first Indian Edition—of a famous book first published nearly half a century ago, in 1903. It seeks to describe Ancient India, during the period of Buddhist ascendancy, from a new point of view. It describes the peoples and the polity of the age in great detail. The author says: 'The economic conditions in such villages were simple. None of the householders could have been what would now be called rich.

On the other hand there was a sufficiency for their simple needs, there was security, there was independence. There were no landlords and no paupers. There was little if any crime'. He says further that there were but few wealthy men and that 'the great mass of the people were well-to-do peasantry, or handicraftsmen, mostly with land of their own'. He says again: 'The vernacular was used first. Then, gradually what were considered more learned forms (taken from the dead language used in the priestly schools) were, in a greater and greater degree, made use of, till, finally the regular Sanskrit became used exclusively'.



He describes how slowly Buddhist and Jaina influence was driven out by Hindu resurgence in North India and then in South India. He then describes the evolution of the Jātakas. Next he proceeds to describe the evolution of religious beliefs from the time of the *Rg-Veda* to that of Buddhism and refers to the 'most complete and unquestioned freedom, both of thought and expression, which the world had yet witnessed'. He also describes the times of Chandragupta, Ashoka, and Kanishka. There is much that is debatable in some of his views and conclusions. But he has given many data to show the process of the decline of Buddhism in India. The Magadha rule declined and 'there was no really paramount power in India'.

The author writes: 'This introduction of the use of Sanskrit as the lingua franca is a turning-point in the mental history of the Indian peoples'. Slowly Hinduism displaced Buddhism and Jainism. He says: 'What had been the predominant national faith has become the faith of a minority. India, which can fairly, down to the time of Kanishka, be called "Buddhist India" ceases to be so. And the process goes on, slowly indeed but continually, until there is not a Buddhist left in the land where Buddhism arose'. The author discounts the theory of the persecution of Buddhists by the Hindus. He says: 'I do not believe a word of it. . . . We must seek elsewhere for the causes of the decline of the Buddhist faith; and they will be found, I think, partly in the changes that took place in the faith itself, partly in the changes that took place in the intellectual standard of the people. And in both respects the influence of the foreign tribes that invaded India from the north-west can scarcely be exaggerated'.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

**INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND THOUGHT.** BY DR. V. P. S. RAGHUVANSHI. *Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publishers, Hospital Road, Agra. Pages 315. Price Rs. 6.*

The story of the epic movement for the freedom of India is the theme of the book under review. The story is enchanting enough, for here have figured, as active participants, many of the greatest sons and daughters of India, who used as their weapon *not* bayonets and spears but irresistible soul force; and the story is told in these pages in an eminently readable form.

The book is divided into three parts, in addition to the introductory general section which deals with the conditions that gave rise to the nationalist movement, such as the Mutiny of 1857, the rise of the Indian National Congress, and the reactionary role of the British administration in India. Part I deals with the rise and growth of the movement from 1875 to 1900, in three chapters—which give

a brief resume of the beginnings of the movement (1876-85), the ascendancy of liberalism (1885-1905), and a survey of the development of political thought, termed Constitutionalism. Part II covers the period from 1900 to 1919 and deals, in four chapters, with the growth of extremism and militant nationalism, resulting from Tory misrule, economic distress and discontent, and undignified treatment of Indians abroad and manifesting itself in the boycott of foreign goods, in the Swadeshi movement, and also in giving birth to a revolutionary movement. The rise of the extremist party is then sketched and the personalities of the period are briefly noticed. Part III opens with the coming in of Gandhiji into Indian politics and is properly titled 'Gandhian period'. It is a period of constructive nationalism and mass movements (1917-47). In seven chapters is set forth the subsequent history of the movement which ultimately brought us our freedom in August 1947. The very last chapter is devoted to 'Gandhi and Gandhism'.

The book is thus a survey of India's struggle for freedom, considered against 'the intellectual, emotional, and economic background', in which British policies and communal politics played their part. At places the author could have been more precise and accurate regarding dates and expressive language. For instance: The year of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna is given as 1834 (page 23) instead of 1836; the year of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago (addressed by Swami Vivekananda) is given as 1894 (page 24) instead of 1893; and it is not at all a happy expression to say (page 84) that 'the *propaganda* of the various religious associations like the Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission turned the popular imagination back to the glories of the past'. The treatment is concise and critical, and the language is clear and straightforward. The printing and get-up need greater attention. The work will prove interesting both to advanced students of history and politics and to the general reader.

K. R. PISHAROTI

**POETS AND MYSTICS.** BY NOLINI KANTA GUPTA. *Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369, Esplanade, Madras 1. Pages 144. Price Rs. 3.*

Sri Gupta has written a most readable and instructive book of critical essays and notes on such diverse themes as the poetry of Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Pascal, Hilton, and Blake, and mystic poetry, and Vivekananda. The essay on mystic poetry is thought-provoking and the author's conclusions are based on a fairly wide reading and intensive study of the most significant poets in India and Europe. He has many good things to say in his thoughtful appreciation of the 'Four Quartets' and the later poetry of T. S. Eliot. The opening essays on the Age of Sri Aurobindo and his poetry



are marked by intimate and sensitive understanding. Scholarship, critical acumen, and clarity of thought and expression are the outstanding qualities of Sri Gupta's work which will be gladly welcomed by all lovers of poetry and criticism.

A. V. RAO

#### HINDI-ENGLISH

KALYANA KALPATARU—MANASA NUMBER III. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pages 290. Price Rs. 2-8.

Here is the third and last part of the *Rāma-charita Mānasa*—the great work of the renowned Hindi poet Tulsidas. The first and second parts of this work were published in the two previous annual numbers of *Kalyana Kalpataru*. The rendering of this part is also on the same lines as the first two, i.e. it contains the Hindi original text in Devanagari type, followed by a simple,

running English translation. Explanatory notes have been appended where necessary. This volume contains the last three sections of the *Mānasa*, viz. *Sundara-kāṇḍa*, *Lankā-kāṇḍa*, and *Uttara-kāṇḍa*, and is well illustrated, including nine tri-colour pictures.

#### BENGALI

VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTION PATRIKA—SILVER JUBILEE NUMBER. Pages 156.

This beautifully got up Silver Jubilee Number of the magazine of the Vivekananda Institution, Howrah, contains interesting articles mainly written by the young students themselves, as also messages of goodwill from many distinguished personalities. Some articles are reproductions from earlier issues of the magazine. The articles reveal the enthusiasm of the students and their deep and intelligent interest in current topics.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE DIST.

#### REPORT FOR 1950-1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianai-kenpalayam, Coimbatore Dist., is a rural Centre. The following is a brief report of its activities for the year 1950-51:

**High School:** The school provides for a bifurcated course in Engineering at the IV Form stage. There were 20 boys for this course. The strength of the school was 170.

**Industrial Section:** It serves as the crafts section for the boys of the first three Forms and as engineering workshop for High School classes. It is very well equipped and manufactures centrifugal pumps, agricultural implements, etc. to meet the needs of the surrounding villages. Soap is also being manufactured as a cottage industry.

**Training School:** The Gandhi Basic Training School had 35 trainees in the Junior Class and 28 in the Senior. Spinning and weaving are the main basic crafts.

**Kalanilayam:** The T. A. T. Kalanilayam continued to be the model school for the Basic Training School.

**Post-Graduate Training in Basic Education:** Two batches were trained during the year of whom 39 were men and 16 women.

**The Teachers' Training College:** The strength of the college during the year was 21.

**Rural Service:** In addition to visits to villages and cleaning work, adult education was organized on a regular basis by means of films, dramas, and celebration of festivals, besides literary training. The adult night school had 40 students. The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Memorial Rural Sports were organized as usual in which 250 children and 50 adults participated. The annual arts competitions attracted 176 boys and girls from 30 High Schools.

**Rural College:** It had 28 students on the rolls who were mainly drawn from the working classes and rural population. It imparts knowledge in literature, science, history and geography, culture, economics, health and sanitation, etc. through Tamil. 244 popular talks were given during the year on these subjects.

**Sri Ramakrishna Utsav:** Nearly 20,000 people attended the Utsav from the surrounding villages. There were music, discourses, Harikatha, and an educational exhibition on the occasion.

**Dispensary:** 18,451 cases were treated during the year. 68 cases of labour, in the near by villages, were attended to by the midwife attached to the dispensary.

**New Schemes:** The Vidyalaya proposes to start a School of Engineering next year for which buildings are being put up and machinery worth a lakh of rupees has been purchased. A committee of Tamil scholars has been set up to carry on research into the great *Tirukkural* and publish a reliable edition of it with available commentaries, etc. in



two volumes of about 1,000 pages each at a cost of about Rs. 60,000.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS

#### REPORT FOR 1950

The year 1950 is a landmark in the history of the Home of Service as it has completed 50 years of its devoted service. At present it has an indoor hospital with 115 beds, two operation theatres, outdoor dispensaries treating on an average about 1,000 patients a day, a branch outdoor dispensary at Shivala, and two invalids' Homes having 50 and 25 beds for female and male invalids respectively.

*Indoor General Hospital:* The total number of cases admitted during the year was 2,604 of which 2,096 were cured, 162 relieved, 110 discharged otherwise, 150 died, and 86 remained at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases was 474 of which 381 were major cases. The total number of Ghat and roadside patients admitted during the year was 86. Two X-ray units have been added to the hospital equipment during the year.

*Refuge for Aged and Invalid Men and Women:* The refuge is meant for poor and destitute invalids in the city of Banaras. Though it has a capacity to accommodate 25 men and 50 women it was possible to maintain only 21 invalids during the year for paucity of funds.

*Outdoor Dispensaries:* The total number of new patients treated at the outdoor dispensaries was 1,04,633 and that of repeated cases was 2,87,868 including patients treated at the Shivala Dispensary where the new cases treated were 37,681 and repeated cases 78,538. The number of surgical cases was 1,827, including 314 at the Shivala Branch.

*Other Activities:* The Home gave relief in cash, of more than Rs. 2,000, and in kind to poor invalids, helpless persons, and poor students.

*Finance:* The total receipts for the year under review was Rs. 91,149-12-5 and the total expenditure was Rs. 1,14,093-2-0 thus leaving a deficit of about Rs. 23,000.

The Home needs funds for improvements, repairs and reconstructions, as well as for carrying on its normal activities. Many of the beds remain to be endowed which may be endowed in the name of dear and near ones at Rs. 6,000 per bed in the surgical ward, Rs. 5,000 per bed in the general ward, and Rs. 4,500 per bed in the Invalid Home. Contributions for any of the above purposes may be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Ramakrishna Road, Banaras—1.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, LUCKNOW

#### REPORT FOR 1948-1950

The Sevashrama was founded in the year 1914. The following is a summary of its activities for the three years 1948 to 1950:

*The Outdoor Dispensary:* The dispensary treated 99,419 cases in 1948, of which 19,034 were new; 1,50,567 cases in 1949, of which 25,363 cases were new; and 1,59,112 cases in 1950, of which 26,802 were new.

*Night School:* The strength of the school during the three years was 42, 61, and 50 respectively.

*Afternoon School:* The school which was mainly meant for the benefit of Harijan boys had a strength of 85 in 1948. It had to be closed on 30th April, 1949, since the Compulsory Education Scheme has been enforced by the Government.

*Library and Reading Room:* The Library had 4,560, 4903, and 5,108 volumes respectively during the three years and correspondingly the issues were 3,415, 3,047, and 3,929. The Reading Room received 24 papers and periodicals.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 27th February 1952.



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य चरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## THE BROODING SPIRIT

*Ava sindhum varuṇo dyaur iva sthād drapso na śveto mṛgastuviṣmān,  
Gambhīraśamso rajaso vimānaḥ supārakṣatraḥ sato asya rājā.*

Like yonder azure of boundless Peace  
The Mystery broods over all.

A swift stream of the Immortal's Joy  
He calls down from on high;  
A shining Drop in the shoreless Void is He,—  
The White Deer of Life, waxing strong;  
In the abysmal Depth  
Thrills His assenting Word  
That diffuses Creation's rosy dawn.

The invincible Might is He  
Who ferries the trusting Soul to Light,  
And sways over this realm of Forms  
Where all is Truth.

—*Maitrāvaruṇir Vasiṣṭha (Ṛg-Veda, VII. 87. 6)*  
(Translated by Anirvan)



# A LETTER OF SISTER NIVEDITA

(An open letter addressed to Hindu women)\*

Castle Kernan,  
Triplicane (Madras)  
23rd December, 1902

DEAR AND HONoured LADIES,

It is impossible for me to express my sorrow at the accident which has deprived me of the opportunity of seeing you this afternoon and has at the same time brought so many of you so far for nothing.

I understand that it was your love and reverence for my great Guru<sup>1</sup> that led you to gather in such large numbers at the Tondamandalam High School Hall. It would have been an unspeakable pleasure to me could I have seen you face to face and talked with you of all that his coming meant to us in the West, and of all his burning hopes for the people of his own land. It was his conviction that the future of India depended even more on Indian women than on Indian men. And his faith in us all was immense. It was Indian women who went gladly to the burning pyre, in days of old, to burn beside the dead body of the husband, and no hand was strong enough to turn them back. Sita was an Indian woman. So was Savitri. Uma, performing austerities to draw Mahadeva to her side, was the picture of an Indian woman. Was there any task, he argued, to which women such as these could prove unequal?

In all lands holiness and strength are the treasures which the race places in the hands of woman, to preserve, rather than in those of man. A few men here and there become great teachers, but most have to spend their days in toil for the winning of bread. It is in the home that these renew their inspiration and their faith and insight and the greatness of the home lies in the *tapasyā* of the women. You, Indian wives and mothers, do not need to be reminded of how much Rama, Sri Krishna, and Shankaracharya owed to their mothers. The quiet, silent lives of women, living in their homes like *tapasvinis*, proud only to be faithful, ambitious only to be perfect, have done more to preserve the Dharma and cause it to flourish than any battles that have been fought outside.

Today our country and her Dharma are in a sore plight, and in a special manner he calls on her daughters at this moment to come forward, as those in the ages before, to aid her with a great *Śraddhā*. 'How shall this be done?'—We are all asking. In the first place let Hindu mothers renew in their sons the thirst for Brahmacharya. Without this our nation is shorn of her ancient strength. No country in the world has an ideal of the student's life so high as this and if it be allowed to die out of India where shall the world look to restore it? In Brahmacharya is this secret of all strength, all greatness. Let every mother determine that her sons shall be great! And secondly, can we not cultivate in our children and ourselves a vast *compassion*? This compassion will make us eager to know the sorrows of all men, the griefs of our land and the dangers to which, in these modern days, our religion is exposed, and this growing knowledge will produce strong workers, working for work's sake, ready to die, if only they may serve their country and fellow men. Let us realize all that our country has done for us,—how she

\* See *To Our Readers*.

<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda.



has given us birth and food and friends, our beloved ones, and our faith itself. Is she not indeed our *Mother*? Do we not long to see her once more '*Mahā-Bhārata*'? Such are a few of the things, beloved mothers and sisters, that I think that my Guruji would have said to you in so much better words than I have been able to find.

I thank you once more for the reverence you have shown him in the honour done to my so unworthy self. I beg of you always,—for his sake, who made me his daughter, and therefore your countrywoman,—to think of me and pray for me as your little sister, who loves this beautiful and holy land and who longs only to be shown how to serve you more and more effectively. And may I remind you also of him who stood behind the Swami Vivekananda, his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa; and Kālī, the Great Mother, whose power worked through both of these great souls, and will yet work doubtless in any of us who will but lend ourselves to her influence?

In the name, and in the love of that Great Mother, I commend myself to you as, ladies,

Ever your most loving Sister,  
NIVEDITA  
(of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda)

## MODERN APPROACH TO AN OLD PROBLEM

BY THE EDITOR

*Ka upāyo gatih kā vā kā cintā kaḥ samāśrayah,  
Yena iyaṁ-aśubhodarkā na bhavet-jīvitātāvī.*

'What is the method, what is the way, what is the science, and what is the refuge—to save this life from undesirable happenings?'

—*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, 1-31-6.

Notwithstanding perennial discussions and investigations through tens of centuries, man seems to have arrived at but little understanding of the essential core of his nature, his powers, and his potentialities. The mystery of life is still as great as ever. Nobody can say with certainty whence and how man came into being. To those who are conscious of the spiritual basis of life, boundless and inexhaustible are the great glories of God. 'End is there none to the universe of God,' they exclaim, 'and also is there no beginning!' To many others, life is an adventurous expedition to the Unknown, a grope in unfathomable space, seeking to understand the structure of and transcend the limitations in what they call

Nature. The more perspicacious among them find it possible to accept the concept of the universe as a world of pure thought, with a non-mechanical reality as its substratum. Unlike the primitive man or the savage, the modern does not find himself face to face with a natural world that is inexplicably capricious, puzzling, and intricate. The new knowledge of the universe does not make life appear an inglorious struggle for mere survival until death overtakes it. Nor does it let man believe that he is subject to blind inconsequence and has unceasingly to wage war with a universe that seemed actively hostile to life.

The problem of life and death has forced



itself on men's minds from the beginning of time. Man finds that he is helpless against circumstances and that his best efforts avail nothing. He is led to the conclusion that there is some unseen hand which controls and shapes the universe, some intelligent power behind the phenomenal world which impels and guides everything from within. In spite of all the splendid achievements of modern science, man still lives surrounded on every side by mysteries and miracles. From the formless mist to the finished star, the entire visible universe presents a vast variety and dissimilarity that baffles the keenest human understanding. Nobody need be told of the existence and inevitability of suffering, sickness, old age, and death. Life, as we commonly know it, is not free from what are known as the pairs of opposites—such as pleasure and pain, success and failure, joy and sorrow. Yet, in a living universe, life, though complex, is not without meaning or purpose. And the problem of problems that has confronted man from the most ancient times is: What is the goal of life and how best to achieve it? The illumined and enlightened teachers of humanity who have attained that supreme goal declare in unequivocal terms that behind and beyond this life on the surface there is a deeper and more permanent life which knows no suffering or death, and that the goal of human life is to attain to this state of unalloyed bliss, of pure, infinite consciousness. They further declare that the easiest and best means of attaining this supreme state is through renunciation of all weakness and worldliness and the awakening of the inner spiritual vision. In other words, every man should strive to know God and realize Him through loving worship of and unbroken communion with Him.

It is well known that it has been commonly understood that the 'ancient' approach to everything in the universe has been 'religious', 'conservative', and based more on intuition than on reason, while the 'modern' approach has been 'scientific', 'rational', and 'secular'. There is no doubt man's attitude to

thought and life has undergone a tremendous change in its transition from the ancient to the modern times. Today men are not wanting,—men who vaunt their modernity,—who glorify the demands of the flesh and who seek freedom in the 'thousand bonds of physical comforts and sense-pleasures'. These people, in their self-styled role as 'benefactors' of humanity, urge men to go in pursuit of the hedonistic pleasure-principle as the goal of life. They jestingly ask, 'What is God, Truth, or spirituality?' and do not care to wait for an adequate answer. Nor do they ever stop to enquire whether such a discredited materialistic and heterodox view of life has led man to the promised land of prosperity and plenty. The scientific approach, however rational and secular, has not succeeded in decreasing the complexity and insecurity of life under modern conditions. For, science itself is in deep waters, and the secular rationalist cannot halloo till he is out of the wood. The search for a purely physical reality underlying Nature has not only proved futile but has brought us no nearer to the ultimate truth of existence. The new background of science more than confirms the 'ancient' view that life on earth is not a fortuitous occurrence and that we must probe deeper into the fundamental nature of things before we can arrive at anything definite and conclusive.

The realization of Truth is undoubtedly an arduous task. Every seeker is perplexed at the outset of his search. Different religions prescribe different paths which lead to goals that are apparently at variance with one another. One is bewildered at the sight of 'so many gods, so many creeds, and so many paths that wind and wind'. He tries to reach the goal by seeking to combine as many as he possibly can of the various views of God, soul, and the world. But such an eclectic or syncretic philosophy of life can help but little. The great difficulty with the modern is not the absence of the old problem of human striving and achievement but his attitude towards and approach to that problem. Human



personality is distinctly individualistic and it would be wrong to proceed to investigate and handle human materials on all fours with material inorganic things. Each individual has to be dealt with as he is, allowing him to exercise his own capacity and choose his own ideals and values. Dealing with insensate Nature or even the physical body, which respond to certain accepted norms and stimuli in an expected manner, is not the same as dealing with the vastly creative and powerfully dynamic spiritual principle that constitutes the essence of man.

Science, art, and religion are but the different expressions of the same eternal verity of existence. All humanity, through diverse paths, crooked or straight, has been approaching the One Truth which seers call by various names. In the words of Paul Deussen, one of the great savants of the West, 'We are unable to look into the future; we do not know what revelations and discoveries are in store for the restlessly inquiring human spirit. But one thing we may assert with confidence,—whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, the principle will remain permanently unshaken, and from it no deviation can possibly take place. If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle, which presents itself to the philosopher in the nature of things all the more clearly the further our knowledge extends, the key can only be found where alone the secret of Nature lies open to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost Self'. It was this insistent and irrepressible call of the soul from its depth that roused man's consciousness and compelled him as it were to go in search of a lasting solution to the riddle. This eventually called for the choosing of a definite ideal in life and following it up with constancy of purpose and unwavering zeal. The search, especially in Western countries, was undertaken in and through the external world, and the scientists looked without for the ultimate Reality. The seers of Vedanta, turning their mind inwards, into the depths of the soul, dis-

covered, through meditation and superconscious intuition, the ultimate Truth within the innermost core of man's being.

If the vast and varied experience afforded by external Nature is insufficient to obtain the complete solution for the fundamental problem that assails the human mind, man has perforce to turn from the external universe to the internal. Through experience in the school of day to day life, which is not without its unrelenting rubs and worries, man realizes the great truth that not by wealth, nor by progeny, nor even by much learning but by the realization of Truth alone can supreme happiness and eternal freedom be attained. Sooner than later, a discerning man discovers that the ultimate goal of life to which he owes allegiance cannot be approached successfully either through ascetic mortification of the flesh or through self-seeking sense-gratification. The hedonistic attitude to life can at best satisfy the biological urges and appetites and those too for a time. Uninterrupted pursuit of enjoyment, an alluring prospect though, does not solve, nay, has not solved, the inveterate evils and hatreds that have corrupted men's hearts. The end of life is the attainment of the Highest Good (*nihśreyas*), and not pleasures and comforts (*preyas*) alone. A complete spiritual transformation of 'man the brute' into 'man the god' through strivings of the soul is the purpose of evolution, and history records these strivings and this supreme purpose in unmistakable terms.

Times have been rapidly changing and there can be not the least doubt that the present-day trends in civilization call for a modern approach to the old problem of life's goal. A living society has always to re-adjust itself to circumstances, if it has to progress. Want of the capacity to adapt itself to changing forces and conditions is certainly a deplorable sign of petrification. At the same time, it should not be forgotten the fundamental problem of human relations is nothing new. The approach to its solution will be and ought to be new. The need in the



human soul remains vitally alive and insistent even today. Any modern approach which seeks to exempt true religion and pure spirituality from the field of human striving towards a better world order is bound to be inadequate, partial, and unsatisfactory. The old approach was through religion and spirituality. It could not be otherwise. And now, too, it cannot be anything apart from these. But, what is needed is a more dynamic and positive kind which embraces all other sciences of life hitherto pursued and goes even further than these in its sweep and profundity. This, in short, is the Vedantic approach, which does not contradict in the least and yet is not tied down by any religious, mystical, or secular movements and institutions. Its fundamental principles are: 'Unity in variety', 'Divinity of man', 'Oneness of existence-knowledge-bliss', and 'the harmony of religions and sects'. In the strictest sense, it is nothing modern at all; it is the oldest approach to life's problems the world has known. And yet, it is modern in the sense that it is universal and most suited to our own times.

Progress is the watchword of the modern world. Yet, how notoriously hard it is to define and measure it? It is clear beyond doubt that the removal of temptations that incite men to crime and the inequalities and injustices that bring misery upon the poor and the weak does not of itself ensure the all-round goodness and happiness that man is looking for. It is also clear that religion, or for the matter of that anything that concerns the cultural interests of man, appears to be of no consequence when large masses of people are seen to remain unfed, unclothed, and uneducated. In actual life, the relation of man to man is most important. Love, sympathy, and fellow-feeling are the great factors that keep civilization from breaking up. Religion binds man to man more than any other force in the world. It creates the common bond of not only mutual love and charity but also allegiance to one God, one goal, and one world. Religion without humanity and

humanity without religion are both incomplete. As has been uttered by St. John, 'If a man say "I love God" and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for, he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' If religion is complex to those who are scared away by the numerous creeds, dogmas, and rituals, it is because they are ignorant of the fact that religion is also creative, dynamic, and all-embracing. 'It (religion) gets hold of the whole man,' observed Masaryk, the great President of Czechoslovakia, 'his mind, his feelings and actions, his whole life; it gets hold of nations and of all society'.

It is still not widely understood that the conclusions of science are not only not opposed to but are in conformity with the findings of Vedanta. Today there is a wide measure of agreement between the approaches to the ultimate of physics and philosophy. The 'dualism' of mind and matter, or, in other words, the spiritual and the material, which was responsible to an extent for the supposed hostility between science and religion, seems very likely to fade out. To modern scientists the universe shows positive evidence 'of a designing and controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds'. When once Einstein was told that the introduction of God into scientific discussion was quite out of place, for, science had nothing to do with religion, he pertinently observed that this disclosed a very superficial concept of science and also of religion, and added, 'Speaking of the spirit that informs modern scientific investigations, I am of the opinion that all the finer speculations in the realm of science spring from a deeper religious feeling, and that without such feeling they would not be fruitful'. However, the general admission of scientists, whose noses are glued to the experimental table, that the process of evolution suggests some 'directive intelligence' behind the universe, need not be too much relied upon as testimony for the existence of God. For, religion does not need to be sustained by any scientific discovery.



Religion springs from the deeper source of all knowledge and science.

The truly religious approach to the problem of the purpose and goal of life has never been without its ardent votaries. Fortunately, the world has not witnessed only one man who has taken to the path of spiritual realization or only one nation which has produced men to whom the world of Spirit was a more tangible reality than that of matter. Spiritual giants, who have realized the ultimate Truth and who have lived and walked with God incarnate have been born in every part of the world. They, by their lives and teachings, have shown mankind the best approach to the artless art of right living. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'The eternal Vedantic religion opens to mankind an infinite number of doors for ingress to the inner shrine of Divinity, and places before humanity an almost inexhaustible array of ideals, there being in each of them a manifestation of the Eternal One. With the kindest solicitude, the Vedanta points out to aspiring men and women the numerous roads, hewn out of the solid rock of the realities of human life, by the glorious sons, or human manifestations of God, in the past and in the present, and stands with outstretched arms to welcome all—to welcome even those that are yet to be—to that Home of Truth, and that Ocean of Bliss, wherein the human soul, liberated from the net of Maya, may transport itself with perfect freedom and with eternal joy'.

The spiritual approach to human problems does not certainly aim at any 'over-estimation of man' or the production of a

'dextrous paralysis'. The gross manner in which vice is permitted to outshine virtue, under the guise of material advancement, is a patent fact. Seers and scriptures are not unnecessary, as otherwise false and even dangerous prophets will most surely occupy their places. Human unity is most secure on a spiritual foundation rather than on political or even ethical principles. With the strength born of renunciation and out of love springing forth from the spiritual awareness of the divinity ever present in all beings, the follower of the Vedantic approach to life, men, and things, becomes best fitted to work for the highest good of humanity. Swami Vivekananda taught how to blend spiritual well-being with material advancement, how to integrate science, religion, and philosophy, and how to combine the ideals of the East and the methods of the West for the attainment of peace and the liberation of the human spirit. Referring to the new spiritual awakening, following in the wake of Sri Ramakrishna, whom he called 'the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in religion', the Swami proclaimed in vivid language:

'The dead never return; the past night does not reappear; a spent-up tidal wave does not rise anew; neither does man inhabit the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, O man, we invite you to the worship of the living present; from the regretful brooding over by-gones, we invite you to the activities of the present; from the waste of energy in retracing lost and demolished pathways, we call you back to broad new-laid highways lying very near. He that is wise, let him understand'.

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'One must have for God the yearning of a child. The child sees nothing but confusion when his mother is away. You may try to cajole him by putting a sweetmeat in his hand; but he will not be fooled. He only says, "No, I want to go to my mother." One must feel such yearning for God.'

—Sri Ramakrishna



# KINDNESS

BY GERALD HEARD

Why should we think about kindness? Surely it is obvious, basic, and easy. Talking and thinking about such great, sane common-places as kindness simply spoils them. Just go ahead and be kind! Everything then will work out. Why make what is clear all muddled by discussion? We make things difficult by definitions and devices.

That is what the practical man often says. That is what he has against religion. It makes things complex, elaborate, technical. As for him, he is content to be straightforward and direct. *Just be kind.*

But the trouble with the word 'kind' is that it is no longer simple. Even when it seemed simple it was paradoxically double. It is only when it is vague that it seems to be easy. When it is definite it is difficult. The word by gross over-use in careless hands has become a dangerously blunted term. Blunt words are more dangerous than sharp knives because they lead to deadly misunderstandings. The word 'kind' is difficult because it is precise. It means '*kin*—of the same sort'.

When we tried to make a science of life the first thing we had to do was to distinguish the different sorts of life. The first division is into species. 'Species' is the Latin word for kin and kind. Species means those groups that can breed with each other because they are kin, and won't breed with any of the other species because they are not kin.

Turn from science and biology to man and history. We see the same thing. Kindness does exist very definitely—in the exact sense of the word 'definitely'. Small, intense centres of devoted kindness are always breaking out and building up. Most men are passionately kind and loyal to their family, town, clan, and tribe. They are less kind to nations, less again to empires. Small communities have lasted for millennia, nations for centuries,

empires for generations. Sometimes the biggest empires last only for decades. The bigger the area the weaker the kindness. Naturally, inevitably: the range of the senses is the limit of the emotions. As men grow in power but not in self-knowledge, they deny this fact. Instead of cities squabbling, nations campaigning, and empires grappling, we have ideologies mutually annihilating. Crusades pour out, crusades which are the most widespread and cruel of wars. For now, to my natural dislike of and non-kinship with strangers, I add a determination to make them similar to me, to convert them. Once we said frankly: 'Go away. I don't like you'. Now we say: 'I'm coming after you to alter you until you're similar to me'. Naturally, we meet with a warm reception!

This determination to like mankind lets hell loose. There's the devil to pay, and he alone gets paid. To say you love mankind in this way is tantamount to saying you are prepared to massacre humanity. For hell has one fury more hellish than a woman scorned, and that is a missionary rebuffed. After each ideological crusade, after each determination to be so kind to all that I will have a right to alter them until they are so like me they like me, there is a reaction.

The last patcher-up of peace after the last crusade of crusading kindness was Talleyrand. After the ideological explosion of the French Revolution, this lame old realist, in whose long and devious life Napoleon himself was only an episode, was given the task of making men live together. They had shown they could not like each other in a state of equality nor even endure being under one efficient master. As he built up the diplomatic corps (which more or less kept European anarchy from becoming wholly homicidal for a hundred years), the old teacher's first advice was: *pas de zele*



—above all, no enthusiasm. Learn that people are not lovable and not kindly, any more than you are. Be moderate in your hopes. Give people what they want. Understand what they need.

First *cherchez la femme*. Woman is man's first need. Without a private romance a man may start a public conflagration just because he is bored. Next, for sex itself cannot be relied on wholly to satisfy man, give him food. 'Eating', said this great anthropologist, 'is the only pleasure that can be practised three times a day and with care can be made to last each time an hour'. So the master diplomat won Europe a reprieve of three generations. Then once again the deluge of crusading kindness flushed out the quiet and stagnant pools of culture.

And now, what of the morrow? Well, of course mankind is far tougher than we thought. I am using the word 'tough' in its precise sense. We can endure frightfully rough handling that would make a tiger lose its nerve and a python schizophrenic. The periodic cloud-burst of emotional crusading is nearly over. The dictators have had their day. We can hear at the door the limping tread, the tap of the ebony cane of the old diplomatist. Is that then the invariable third act of our ever-recurring tragicomedy and Grand Guignol farce? It will be, if we won't understand kindness; for verily 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light'. What is wrong with our kindness, and is kindness, like patriotism, not enough?

Kindness is enough; love is the fulfilment of the law. But it must be real kindness. And ours has not been. Our kindness has a little realism in it as far as it goes, as far as it is natural—but that is not very far either in area or in time. We are kind to those with whom we are really kin. To start at the foot of the ladder, many mothers love their children. This is right and good as far as it goes. But it doesn't go very far. It is animal love, and animal love is wonderful as long as the young want it. Then it ceases. But we humans will have nothing of the sort. Why? Because our

love is an alloy. It is one-third real devotion and loss of self in a cause larger than self. But it is two-thirds prestige-building and self-seeking. Motherhood is a prestige part. Crusades command crammed cradles. Women want to have children, because to be childless is to lack a certain tassel of social dignity. But, further, even that is not enough for us. The mother, having demanded of the community that she shall be praised for following the animal pattern of her nature, requires also that the child shall pension her for the honour she has done it.

Now this is dangerous nonsense, as dangerous as any crusade of kindness. As the two Drs. Suttie have pointed out in their important book, *Some Problems of Love and Hatred*, the relationship between child and mother is one of symbiosis—they are a joint organism and each gets intense pleasure from being in play with the other. That can't last, but when it is over you cannot send in a bill to Nature or to society because of your self-sacrifice in performing an instinctive pattern. As well might one who had dined well ask his host to pay him for having undergone the biological task of taking nourishment. A man who falls in love is not deserving of payment for his self-sacrifice.

Our kindness then starts as, and for a little time is, real kindness, kin, liking. Then it gives out and we cheat. Our kindness then is sham. It is cupidity because it wants to be treated as an exceptional benefactor instead of as one who has already been well paid as an equal and a partner. 'Verily I say unto you, They have their reward'. To ask to be paid twice for one small service is to be, not kind, but a ruiner of common kindness—a cheat. So from the parents that are always talking of the ingratitude of their children, to the politicians who are always talking of the ingratitude of democracy, we view the hypocritic front of humanity. Our kindness is doubly false. It is pride, and therefore it has no sense of kinship for people that it says it loves and serves. But it is not too proud to be also fraudulent. It wants to be thought dignified,



but it stoops to scrounge a fee for the exercise of its own indulgencies. Can it be wondered that such a synthetic thing, such a corrupt alloy, crumbles and breaks? It is thoroughly adulterated.

What then are we to do about it? Honesty is the first step. We must see ourselves as we are. That will lead to humility, and humility will bring us down to the threshold of kindness. We shall no longer feel superior to others and so wish to patronize them or desire to be praised for our selflessness and paid for our self-sacrifice. Kindness, of course, is its own reward; and if it isn't, it isn't kindness. Nature has provided throughout that we shall be paid for our natural kindness. She has a grim way with those who send in a fraudulent account for payment already received.

But are we then to remain at simple animal level, basic brute justice? The tormented Medea, finding herself trapped and all her animal passions set against one another by her betrayal, cries: 'I have learnt one thing, to be a true friend to those who befriend me and to be terrible to those who betray'. That, of course, is the old law: 'Thou shalt love thy friend and hate thine enemy'.

But we cannot go on like that. What are we to do? The outlook is not too black. We are learning. We are taking the first step in anthropology. We have found that the first step is to be interested in those who are different. We want to learn from them before we attempt to teach. Now, that is real kindness. Because we start on their level, as kin. We can only teach those from whom we can learn, for only thus can they learn from us.

The second great step in anthropology is to turn that same uncensoring interest on ourselves. Being arrogant and unkin, unkind, we assumed all the others were superstitious, ignorant, contemptible. We alone were reasonable, sensible, informed, and right. We turned a corner when the Linds made their classic study of Middletown. That was the first time that unkind, arrogant, modern man turned the camera on himself. When we are

truly kin with our own selves we can then begin to be kind to others.

'But', say the impatient hot gospellers, and the communists, who instead of being in common with all, are always excluding somebody, purging somebody, liquidating somebody, 'but you wish to keep us at the animal level. Even if your method worked, it would take centuries before this slow osmosis of kindness could percolate through humanity. It takes too long to understand people. We must be cruel to be kind'. And then many of them will suddenly quote, because we seem so low and animal in our modest aims: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect', for He is kind. Precisely. And when we quote scriptures we must not play the devil's trick by leaving out the latter half of the quotation. Why is He unlimited? Because He is kind to the just and the unjust, the evil and the good.

Now this won't do at all for the hot gospeller. God must take sides. He must be with our crusade. Hence the pathetic nonsense of saying that if God doesn't suffer, then He is no God for me, which phrase always has as its corollary: if He doesn't win this war, then I'm done with Him. But if He is kind to the just and the unjust, that is because being so unlimited, He does not belong to one chosen people or one particular species. He is kind to the tapeworm as He is to the baby which to the tapeworm is its lovely warm home. Naturally, people want to force their kindness, their sense of right, their idea of happiness, their belief as to what the end of the universe is—naturally, such people resent and are horrified by such kindness. They don't want to be kin even with their fellow men who happen to think not quite as they think. To be kin with a parasite they consider treason to life!

But if the end of the universe is really to set all life free, if the only way to do that is an infinite patience and an infinite interest, then God's way after all may not be so abominably indifferent, inhuman, alien. On the contrary, it may be because He is so much closer to the



evil, the failure, the perverse, that He sees it with a deeper compassion and a greater hope for its possibilities than we can perceive.

Kindness, then, we see is a gigantic mystery. It is part of the mystery of suffering and of sin, of evil and depravity. And we ourselves, little, odd, self-tortured, unkind atoms, are slowly migrating from animal kindness that serves the purpose of life and takes its wages of animal happiness and goes—we are migrating slowly to God and to the God's-eye view, for which the Latin word is contemplation and the Greek word is theory—the power to see all things from the standpoint of eternity.

We may judge then our kindness as to how far our interest grows in others—not merely tolerance, but a real wonder as to why this is so and why it should so behave. That is the wonder of which Plato speaks when he says, 'By wonder are we saved'—from our narrow unkindness, saved from our narrow glib

assumption that we know and have a right to manage.

That, too, is the compassion, the high compassion of which Buddhism speaks, the high compassion that has gone beyond heart-break and far beyond righteous anger. That compassion never takes sides any more than God takes sides. That compassion is the mark of one who has understood, who is enlightened and sees that all is very good, who is liberated and so works incessantly for the liberation of everything that still can suffer from this ignorance.

When we attain that, then and then only shall we be able, through the temporary freedom that we will grant them, through our humility and patience, to bring all mankind and all life to that eternal freedom to which we have attained. At last we shall be kind to the just and the unjust, to the evil and the good, because at last we are perfect; we are unlimited as our Father in heaven is perfect—ininitely kind, unlimited.

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## THE IDEAL OF RENUNCIATION

BY SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

There exist in the world today two extreme schools of thought regarding both the spiritual life and the worldly life. On the one hand there are those who totally deny the reality of the world; they say, 'Brahman alone is real; everything else is unreal'. And, because of their failure to understand the truth of this dictum, they try to run away from the world and its activities, and will resort to any means, even to the extreme measure of self-torture, in their attempt to overcome the passions of the flesh. On the other hand there are those who deny the existence of anything more real than this world as they know it, and their own relationship to it. To such people this life is the be-all and end-all of existence, and all the

passions and desires of the flesh are for their pleasure and enjoyment. It is probable that this extreme view arose as a reaction to the former view—but both views are wrong. Each has missed the truth.

Before attempting to explain the true ideal of renunciation, which, sooner or later, every one of us must practise, it may be interesting to learn what the great teachers of every religion have taught regarding this subject. We are already familiar with the views of the Church, but if we turn to the teachings of Christ we shall find that he was one of the greatest exponents of renunciation. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life



eternal'. 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'. And did he not tell the rich young ruler who came to him asking what he should do to gain eternal life: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven'? In these, and in many other sayings of Jesus, we find the highest ideal of renunciation expressed in no uncertain terms.

In the teachings of Buddha we find the same ideal based upon the Four Noble Truths, which are: In the world there is suffering; there is a cause for this suffering; there is a way out of suffering; and there is a peace which follows freedom from suffering. If we would tread the path that Buddha pointed out, we must first renounce the world. Again, in the Upanishads we read: 'Not by wealth, nor by progeny, nor by much learning, but by renunciation alone can man attain immortal bliss'.

In every great scripture we find this same emphasis. The Vedanta tells us that the first requisites for spiritual life are discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the non-eternal; the understanding of the truth that God alone is real; and the giving up of all desires and cravings except the one desire to realize God.

Viewed superficially it would seem that these teachings tend to agree with that school of thought which seeks to run away from the world and its activities. But it is not so. Such extreme views have arisen out of a misunderstanding of the ideal. One is reminded of the man with the gnat on his nose. To rid himself of the gnat he shoots at it with a gun, and in so doing shoots himself also.

And yet the dilemma exists. We are ushered into this world; we are given life, and with it the desire to enjoy its attendant pleasures. For a while we are happy, but gradually there creeps in a feeling of dissatis-

faction. The pleasures we once enjoyed lose their savour; they turn to ashes. And yet the hunger remains. For, deep within the recesses of man's heart, there is a hunger for eternal life and abiding happiness—a longing for a joy that knows no end. We are taught to 'love not the world, neither the things that are in the world', and yet this world is all we know. Then what shall we do in such a dilemma? To run away and hide in a cave or a monastery does not solve the problem. For too often we see that while such people may become indifferent to the world, they become extremely self-centred, and love only themselves. The solution therefore lies, not in compromising the ideal, but in understanding its true meaning. Once, when Rama was a little boy he told his father that he wished to renounce the world. His father, being a king, had other plans for his son, but instead of arguing with the boy he sent for a renowned scholar named Vasishtha to come and instruct him. When Vasishtha asked Rama why he wanted to renounce the world he said: 'I want to find God'. 'But', asked the sage, 'can you tell me where God is not? Is He apart from the world that you wish to renounce it?'

In this simple illustration we find the whole truth. Unless we can find the Reality behind the appearance of this world we live in vain; our life and living have no purpose. Today you may think your goal in life is to attain this or that thing, and you may attain it, but still you have not attained the goal. Sri Ramakrishna expressed the truth of this when he said: 'By adding many zeros together you gain nothing, they have no value. But place the unit one before the zeros and they immediately have value'. Of itself the world has no value, no meaning. It is a shadow, and by clinging to the shadow we miss the substance. Behind this apparent life there is a deeper life; behind this seeming world there is a deeper reality; and life takes on new meaning, the world becomes more real for us, when we find the Reality behind this appearance—that Reality which is God.

At one time Sri Ramakrishna was accused



of turning the heads of the young men who came to him, by teaching them the ideals of renunciation and thus making them unfit to take their place in the world. When Sri Ramakrishna heard about this he said: 'By teaching them the true meaning and purpose of life I am preparing them to take their place in the world. But first let them develop devotion to God, let them gain self-control, and then let them go and live in the world. It is better that the boat should float on the water than that the water should get into the boat!' In other words, we must understand the ideal and purpose of life, for without this understanding none can truly live. If we wish to attain anything in life we have to set a definite goal, and if we analyse life we shall see that there is but one goal for all mankind—the realization of the truth of God. For in God alone is to be found the fulfilment of life.

What is it then that stands in the way of our realization of the goal? Is it something outside of ourselves? As we analyse life further we discover that the obstruction lies within ourselves. It is not the world, neither the things of the world; it is our own ignorance. Within us is the Atman, the very presence of God; He is the abiding happiness, the infinite wisdom and the eternal life we are all seeking. He is within and He is without, but instead of seeing that abiding Reality we see something else—we see the shadows. 'I am the Atman, but I do not know that I am the Atman. I consider myself an individual being'. This attitude arises from what is known philosophically as *ego*—the sense of individuality, of separateness from God. And out of this sense of separateness there arise two main desires—the desire to attach ourselves to the world and things which give us pleasure, and the desire to avoid those things which give us pain. Thus we see that first there is ignorance, then that out of ignorance comes ego, which is the root cause of all attachments, aversions, and the clinging to life. When we can fully understand this truth we shall realize that the ideal is not renunciation of the world, but renunciation of the ego. As

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'When the ego dies, all troubles cease to exist'.

There are two principal ways by which the ego may be renounced. One way is the path of analysis, or knowledge, and the other way is the path of love or devotion. He who chooses the path of knowledge must maintain a consciousness of his identity with the Atman. By analysis he must know: 'I am not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego—I am beyond all these. I am the Atman—one with Brahman'. Such a man, by constantly living in this consciousness, soon frees himself of all bodily desires. The activities of his body and mind will continue, but through them all he remains completely detached and unaffected. This path is, however, extremely difficult to follow, for as long as even the pangs of hunger and thirst affect him who attempts to follow it, he has not yet overcome the body-consciousness, and is therefore not yet ready to follow such a path. To illustrate his difficulties, Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Suppose a man desires to reach the roof of his house, but instead of gradually ascending the staircase permits himself to be thrown up bodily. What happens? He reaches the roof no doubt, but his method of reaching it may cause him serious or even permanent injury'.

For the average man the easiest path to follow is the path of devotion. We all have ego, and as long as we live on the plane of the senses we cannot free ourselves from it. Therefore we should try to merge the ego in the will of the Lord—the Atman within. We should surrender it completely to the Lord and let Him use it as an instrument, but in order to do this it is first necessary to learn to practise constant recollectedness of God. We are told that we must love God, but how is it possible to love someone whom we have not seen and do not know? This question arises in the mind of every aspirant, and the same answer is given by all the seers and lovers of God. They say: You do not know God now, but if you will think of Him, if you fill your mind with the constant remembrance of Him, you will come to know He is Love; then that Love



will grow in your own heart, until your very ego will become merged in It, and you will cry out, 'Not I! Not I! but Thou, O Lord!'

Then what follows? Out of this loving devotion to God there will come a normal and natural control of all the passions. For the more you advance towards God the less will be the strength of your cravings and desires for the objects of the world. The lower passions lose their power in the presence of something that is higher and greater. Thus we see that, no matter which path we may follow, we need not run away from the world and its activities. But one point the aspirant must always keep in mind: he must maintain constant remembrance of God.

Now again, as there are two main paths to follow in order to free ourselves from ego, so are there two distinct ways of life in which to practise the ideal of renunciation. They are the way of monasticism and the way of the householder. The difference between these two paths is that the monk owning nothing, being completely devoid of all worldly possessions, practises renunciation both inwardly and outwardly, whereas the householder practises only the inner renunciation. The householder may have great possessions—he may have wealth, a wife, children, and friends; but he remains unattached to them. Having overcome the ego of attachment, he has no sense of possession; he sees God in all things and all things as belonging to God. Nothing he owns belongs to him. His mind remains free and completely detached.

In this connection there arises the very fundamental question of sex and chastity. This is one of the most misunderstood problems of modern life. On the one hand, the Church still preaches that sex is sin and iniquity, and on the other hand modern psychology tells us that repression is bad and that expression is natural and therefore good. Repression is not control. Both attitudes are

extreme and wrong, because neither understands the ideal. Every religion teaches us that sex must be controlled and ultimately overcome. Psychologically the sex energy has to be transmuted into spiritual energy. In the Sanskrit language there is the word *ojas*. There is no English equivalent for this, but it means that energy which accumulates in the brain of one who has completely conquered the sex impulse.

In the scriptures of ancient India we read of the ideal life of the householders. Their life was divided into four stages. The first stage was the student period, when the child was sent to an illumined teacher and remained under his supervision for several years. In this holy association he was educated in the scriptures and in secular knowledge, and, most important of all, he was thoroughly trained in self-mastery and self-control. At the end of this student period he was free to choose which way of life he wished to follow, the way of monasticism or the way of the householder. If he chose to enter into married life, he did so with the understanding that marriage was not an institution for sexual license and selfishness but an institution in which he would find ample opportunity to practise self-control and unselfishness. Having passed through this second stage, he entered into a life of retirement from the world, and then, lastly, into the monastic life of complete renunciation.

But, no matter what stage we may have reached or what path we may be following, we must have that one positive ideal—the ideal of God. We must make Him the ideal, the way, and the end. As my master used to tell us, we must first hold on to the pillar, then we can spin around and around without fear. And so with life in the world. If we will but hold on to the pillar of God, there will be no mistakes in our lives, or, if there are mistakes, they will be corrected.



# THE POWER OF SILENCE

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Silence has been recognized as an important spiritual discipline by all the great religions of the world. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that silence is the most profound spiritual truth. In every part of the world there are recluses and hermits living in solitude and communing with God.

In the Yoga of Tibet, which is very profound, the vow of silence plays an important part. A Tibetan Yogi sometimes takes the vow of silence for five, ten, or twenty years. He goes into a room in a small hut especially built for him, with a stream of water flowing under the floor so that he will have plenty of water; and after he has entered the room, the door is locked from the inside and sealed from the outside. He gives instructions that the door must not be opened until his vow of silence is fulfilled, be it for five or ten or twenty years. There is a window through which food is passed every day. If at any time the person who brings the food sees that it has not been touched for several days, he passes the word about in the community and the door is broken down and the Yogi is brought out, dying or dead. If he is dead they sanctify the bones and sometimes even build shrines over them.

Indian saints also take the vow of silence. Sometime or other during their life they observe a vow of silence. There was a holy man in India who lived only a few years ago and whom Sri Ramakrishna met. He lived in Banaras, on the bank of the Ganges, and until the last day of his life he never uttered a word. People came from all over the country to receive spiritual instruction from him. This is very puzzling to Western minds, but it is a fact that thousands of people had their spiritual life awakened by coming in contact with this holy man. Sri Ramakrishna asked him one day, 'Is there one God or are

there many gods? Is there unity or multiplicity?' The holy man in answer first raised one finger and then raised two fingers. Sri Ramakrishna of course understood the meaning of that instruction. The idea is that when one goes into Samādhi there is only one God, but when one looks around in a normal state of consciousness there is duality or multiplicity.

There was another holy man, whom Swami Vivekananda met and by whom he was profoundly impressed. He was called Pavhāri Baba because he did not eat much food. His name means literally 'air-eater'. For many years, until his very death, he did not utter a word. Pavhāri Baba used to live all alone in a compound, in a hut with mud walls. One day the outside world saw his house was on fire. When they broke into the place they saw that he was seated in the midst of the fire in Samadhi. This was his last great sacrifice. He had used his own body as the oblation of the sacrifice.

What is silence? People associate silence with the tongue. If we do not say a word, we are said to be silent. But spiritual discipline is of a superior silence. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that a man may control his tongue and his sense-organs, but all the while he may be enjoying sense-objects in his mind. The outer organs may be inactive, but the mind may be very active. Such a person is called a hypocrite. Further, it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that some people are born dumb. They never utter a word, but all the time they enjoy sense-pleasures through their mind; the silence they observe is not at all a spiritual silence. In the Hindu books the illustration is given of the crane, standing absolutely quiet near the edge of the marsh. Though he is so quiet, all the time his attention is focussed on a fish,



its prey. When a hypocrite leads that kind of spiritual life we call him a crane.

The real silence is the silence of the mind, the silence of desires. It is created by inwardness of mind. As a man's mind becomes more and more inward his words become fewer and fewer. Then his thoughts are expressed not through words but through his entire personality. A sort of radiation comes from such a man, and that uplifts others. Religious teachers have always extolled silence. Christ asked his disciples to enter into their closets when they prayed, and not stand in the market-place where they could be seen by all and praised. Christ said, 'Do not use vain words'. That is a very important statement. Such words take away the life of the Spirit. At one time one of the preachers of Calcutta came to Sri Ramakrishna. The Master said, 'I understand you are a lecturer. Give a lecture for us. Let us hear you'. The man spoke, praising the glories of God, and the heavens, and all created things. But Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Why do you dwell so much on God's glories? You should contemplate God Himself'. Then he gave the illustration of the orchard. A man goes to a mango orchard and if he is a fool he will spend his time counting the trees and even the leaves on a tree, but if he is intelligent he will become acquainted with the owner of the orchard. If you know the owner you can get all the information about the trees and the fruits, and even eat the fruit. So people should dwell more upon God than upon His glories.

The knowledge that we get from within is far more profound than what we get from the outside world. We are often amazed at the profundity of the teachings of prophets like Christ or Sri Ramakrishna. Hundreds and thousands of metaphysical books have been written based on their teachings, but there is no evidence to prove Christ was educated, and we know that Sri Ramakrishna was illiterate. They were not book-learned. One is really surprised at the wisdom that is being conveyed even now through their teachings.

Those who have read the first chapter of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* will remember that M., a college professor, being trained in English ways of etiquette, knocked on the door of Sri Ramakrishna's room. The maid-servant, who looked after Sri Ramakrishna, told M. to go right in. M. was tremendously impressed with the Master's wisdom as he listened to the inspiring words he was speaking to the roomful of people. M. then asked the maid, 'Does the holy man read a whole lot of books?' The maid answered, 'Oh, dear no, he never touches a book'. Then M. asked how it was, if he read no books, that he could get all this knowledge? The maid said, 'The Goddess of Learning dwells on the tip of his tongue'. M. was really surprised. At that time he could not understand that one could have knowledge without reading books.

Sri Ramakrishna used to explain this through the illustration of a grain-dealer. A grain-dealer sits with a heap of grain by his side and in his hand he holds a pair of scales. The customer comes and asks for two pounds or five pounds of grain, and the dealer measures it out from the heap beside him. Apparently he never runs out of grain, because no matter how many customers come he always has a heap beside him. It is because there is someone there who always pushes more grain from behind. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna would say, those who are really spiritual, those who have the vision of the Divine Mother, always have at their side a heap of Knowledge on which to draw. Their knowledge never runs out. The truth is within man. The soul is omniscient. Books are mere suggestions. If the book of life is not open, the study of outside books does not help. Likewise a teacher does not impart knowledge. All knowledge is within man; it is struggling to come out. But there are some obstructions. The teacher acts like a midwife, removing the obstructions, and the knowledge is delivered. Swami Vivekananda used to say that education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, just as religion is the manifestation of the spirituality already in man.



Why is it that this wisdom is shut off from us? The Upanishads say that it is because we talk too much; we look too far into the outside world. For that reason the door of inner knowledge is shut. We read in the Upanishads that the sense-organs of man are inclined to outward things; that is why we do not see the innermost Self. We only become acquainted with the outside world. But some wise men who want to tap the source of this inner knowledge shut off the sense-organs from the outside world, look within, and see within themselves the source of all wisdom. Through self-control the organs are shut off from the outside world. Self-control is the way to Self-knowledge. The Upanishads say again and again: 'Give up all vain talk'. The Greek philosopher said: 'Man, know thyself'. Vedanta philosophy says that the true Self of man is covered by many layers, and those layers must be removed one by one, and only then does one come in contact with the true Spirit.

One should practise both the silence of the tongue and the silence of the mind. Silence of the tongue is necessary. It helps inner calmness. We all know that too many words heat the brain. After a heated discussion one cannot contemplate. The nervous system gets irritated. Therefore one must refrain from idle talk. We talk too much because there is an emptiness within us. Sri Ramakrishna said that the bees buzz around. How long? As long as they have not tasted honey. When they alight on a flower and sip the honey, the buzzing stops. Or when one takes an empty pitcher and presses it under water there is a gurgling sound, but when the pitcher is full there is no noise at all. So all our talk, all the sound we make, denotes our inner emptiness.

But the control of speech by itself can also be dangerous. It can create a morbid state of mind. In India we have seen holy men who have taken a vow of silence but have failed to create inwardness of mind; they do not develop the bliss of God, and so they gradually break from within. As one practises

control of speech, one must practise along with it silence of the mind; one must awaken the inner spiritual consciousness and practise meditation. I remember once meeting a spiritual seeker. At that time he was practising the vow of silence; but all the time he carried a note-book in his pocket and whenever he met a man he would write, 'What is happening in the world today?' This mechanical silence of the tongue can be very harmful.

The silence of the mind is harder to practise than the silence of the tongue. Desires are without number. You know how they are created: they are created by the impressions of our past actions, and then the outside world stimulates those impressions. Therefore desires must be suppressed. Yoga is defined by Patanjali as the suppression of desires. How this is to be accomplished is described in Raja Yoga. One method is by constant practice and detachment. If we practise constantly, our desires are silenced. Through repetition of God's holy name *om*, and contemplation of the meaning of *om*, one can suppress desires.

Then comes the silence of the will. The silence of the ego is the hardest discipline. The silence of the desire to cling to one's individuality is the most difficult practice. Buddha preached the idea of Nirvāna. Nirvana does not mean voidness. It means the destruction of the will to perpetuate the individualized ego, which is the strongest foundation of our worldly life. This clinging to the ego is the universal characteristic of man. Every man wants to perpetuate his ego and intensify the urge of the will, and as long as he clings to the ego there is no liberation. Therefore the will must be silenced. How does one suppress the impulse of the will? Through the consciousness of man's true nature, that is to say, the universal consciousness. Man's individual ego is only a reflected consciousness.

Therefore one must practise silence of tongue, silence of mind, and the silence of the will.

Discussion and reasoning belong only to



the preliminary search after religious life. Sri Ramakrishna says that in a theatre people talk, they whisper, they gossip—how long? As long as the curtain does not go up. The moment the curtain rises there is absolute silence. Everyone's attention is fixed on the stage. As long as this veil of ego does not go up, we talk and reason, but when the veil is rung up then there is real enjoyment of inward life. Therefore contemplation is much more important than reasoning or argument or discussion. The teachings we are learning from others must be transformed into spiritual experience. We all have heard enough discussions. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'What is the need of reading the whole of the *Bhagavad Gita* or discussing it? All that is written in the eighteen chapters, in the seven hundred verses, you get by repeating the word '*Gītā*' twelve times. That way the word becomes *t(y)āgī*, which indicates renunciation. That is the whole meaning of the *Gita*'. Know the truth and renounce attachment, renounce false desires. 'Let us close the mouth', Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'and start to work'.

There are two ways of studying religion, one from the outside and one from the inside. The study of religion from the outside gives a kind of mental stimulation, an intellectual joy; but one does not really obtain the bliss of spirituality unless one studies religion from the inside. That means, through spiritual practice.

Futile talk is the greatest obstacle of meditation. Christ said, 'Give up vain words'. At another place Christ said, 'You shall have to account for every idle word'. This is a very profound statement. When we try to meditate all of us experience a great deal of distraction. Unconsciously the mind has gone to many places and to many things, and the things the mind thinks about during meditation are unimportant. We do not think of vital things, but of unimportant things, which is much worse. This we see if we watch our mind for only two minutes during meditation. Why is the mind assailed by all these un-

important things at that time? It is because of the vain words we utter throughout the day.

Our conversation falls under three headings. First, malicious and uncharitable criticism of others. We are not in the least interested in those things. We have often heard the phrase, 'Doing good to others without any motive'. That is a very high spiritual virtue. But we try to injure others without any personal motive. Purely selfish disinterested injury to others—that is the meaning of malicious and uncharitable conversation. This is one kind. The second kind of conversation is inspired by self-love, greed, or sensuality. Analyse our daily conversation. We find this element very much present. This, too, is detrimental to spiritual growth.

The third kind of conversation is indulging in meaningless words, without rhyme or reason, just to be pleasant. These meaningless words are even more harmful than malicious words or those inspired by self-love, greed, or sensuality. They are apparently harmless: 'How is the weather?', and so forth; but in the long run they are more harmful. After saying something pleasant, we think it is all over as soon as the words have been spoken; but it is not so. We think this kind of conversation to be harmless, but in spiritual life it has a dangerous effect. It leaves a subtle impression on the mind which manifests itself through restlessness and distraction at the time of meditation. When you sit for meditation you will see that insignificant ideas come to the mind. These distractions are caused by the meaningless words in which we indulge, and these impressions at the time of meditation flit across our minds just as motes of dust and flies flit through a shaft of sunlight, obscuring the light.

Add to these three kinds of conversation the endless monologue which goes on within us all the time. It is no wonder that we are restless!

The question often is asked whether we should discuss our meditation and our spiritual



experiences with our friends. It is an extremely harmful thing to discuss one's spiritual experiences with others. The real effect is lost. We have been taught by our teachers in the monastery that great truth. We can discuss our experiences with our teacher, but not immediately. The so-called visions are of many kinds. Some of them are just the manifestation of our sub-conscious desires. As we try to make our mind inward at the time of meditation, these impressions of past actions come to the surface and those who are emotional or romantic or psychic dramatize them and feel it is something very wonderful. The only way to test whether these experiences are worth while is to watch them for a few days. If they are worth

while they will lead to deeper experiences; but if they are just manifestations of our sub-conscious ideas they will disappear in a day or two, giving rise to other experiences. If we discuss our spiritual experiences with others, even though they are genuine, our friends will not understand, and will perhaps laugh at them, and this will depress us. This is dangerous from a spiritual standpoint. When the hen lays eggs she must hatch them in silence. If, instead of sitting on the eggs, the hen only cackles, the red-footed crow swoops down on the eggs and carries them off. In the same way, if we cackle too hard about our experiences, the red-footed devil comes and robs us of what we have.

(To be continued)

## RAMA AND KRISHNA

BY MOHAN LAL SETHI

Once upon a time a teacher was giving a lesson in Urdu to a little boy who was hardly seven at the time. The lad read from his reader 'Mohammed was the founder of Islam'. Without much thought the teacher put the question to the boy, 'Who was the founder of Hinduism?' As the question escaped his lips the teacher felt that confronted with that question he could not have given a definite answer to it himself. While he was thus deliberating—it was a matter of an instant—the little boy, without any hesitation, replied, 'Rama and Krishna were the founders of Hinduism'. The answer from the boy gave the teacher a rude shock and a pleasant surprise and enthralled him at the same time. Only an unsophisticated and a genuinely simple person could have given this reply.

If any person or persons can be said to be the founders of Hinduism, they are Rama and Krishna. If we take away Rama and *Rāmāyana* and Krishna and *Mahābhārata*

from Hinduism, a vast literature comprising the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Purānas and other books is left; but all these scriptures are for the learned. There is no end to philosophy and real religion in these books, but they are mostly sealed books for the man in the street. The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* are two great sources of inspiration for the average Hindu who has not had much book-learning and who has neither the time nor the inclination in the Kali-yuga to dive into the scriptures. He has time, off and on, to listen to recitals from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* in which the philosophy and religion of the Vedas are propounded in a way that he can understand and get guidance for his daily life.

Rama has placed a noble and immaculate example for the emulation of his devotees. There is no facet of complex human life which Rama has not touched for the guidance of men. For this reason the popular renderings



of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, composed by Tulasidas and other poets of other provinces, have taken hold of the masses in this country. The exposition of Dharma in the *Gita* by Krishna for the benefit of the puzzled and wavering Arjuna is a perpetual source of inspiration for all. Rama and Krishna are the two names to conjure with in India. They have deservedly cast a spell on the minds of the teeming millions of the country for all time. Rama is known under several names, and the names of Krishna are innumerable.

Of all peoples in the world, the Hindus, very early in their long history, came to understand the capacity and the limitations of the human mind and personality. They understood very clearly that every human being was working out his own evolution and ultimate salvation, at his own pace and in his own way. Such being the case, Hindu thinkers, who were always in the van of Hindu society, frowned at any kind of imposition from outside on any person in matters pertaining to the Spirit. Thus every individual enjoyed full freedom in religious belief. Everyone was allowed to have his own *iṣṭa*. This is the reason why there is a multiplicity of faiths within the fold of Hinduism. Hinduism is not a single set creed like Islam. Hinduism is a federation of creeds. Thus India has been singularly free from religious wars and religious persecution.

Besides the above the ancient Hindus realized that God is both Personal and Impersonal. Though the Impersonal God is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, He is best described by 'not this (*neti*), not this (*neti*)'. The Impersonal God passes from eternity into time, takes on human form in order to assist men to pass out of time into eternity. This has happened time and again. In this connection Tulasidas has beautifully sung:

*Sagunahen agunahen nahin kachu bhedā,  
Gāven muni purān budh vedā.*

'There is no difference between the Personal and the Impersonal God. This is what

the Vedas, the Purānas, the Rishis, and the enlightened ones say'.

*Agun arūp alakh aj joi,  
Bhakat prem vaś sagun so hoi.*

'The Impersonal, who is without attributes, who is formless, who cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh, and who is unborn, assumes human form and becomes Personal under the compelling force of the devotee's love'.

*Jo gun rahit sagun soi kaise,  
Jal him uppal bilagh nahin jaise.*

'How is the Impersonal the same as the Personal? Just as water, ice, and hail-stones are not different (but the same)'.

According to Hindu belief, the Impersonal (apparently) assumed human form, and so Rama was born in Ayodhya. By his perfect example Rama showed to erring humanity the way to salvation. Rama willingly subjected himself to untold hardships and privations towards this end. Once again, when Dharma declined and Adharma raised its head, the Impersonal took on human garb and was born as Krishna in Mathura. The Yogas of Bhakti, Karma, and Jnana, which Krishna expounded, are the three main paths to salvation and realization. The expositions of these difficult subjects, given by Krishna form one of the most ancient and sublime chapters of the religious history of humanity.

Under the thralldom of the alien materialistic civilization, the inherent worth of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* was not truly realized by Indians, especially the so-called educated Hindus. Now that the nation is coming into its own, the stage is set for a renewed study and understanding of the great message of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. In a way, these two epics are complementary to each other. There is emphasis on Bhakti in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and there is emphasis on Jnana in the *Mahābhārata*. A thorough grounding in the *Rāmāyaṇa* prepares a person for the better understanding of the teachings of the *Mahābhārata* particularly the teachings contained in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The little lad's answer, 'Rama and Krishna



were the founders of Hinduism', is not historically correct. Rama and Krishna came on the scene long after the beliefs of the ancient Hindus had crystallized out in their scriptures.

In spite of this, the boy's answer contains in a large measure the substance of truth so far as practical Hinduism for the masses is concerned.

## SAINT JNANESWARA

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Chief among the saints who made Paṇḍharpur, with its deity Viṭṭhaladeva, the most important centre of interest in Western India to all holy men during the thirteenth and following centuries was Jñāneśwara, known also as Jnanadeva, a contemporary of Nāmadeva and his most intimate friend and associate.

Born in 1275, at a period of history when Mahārāshtra was at the peak of her prosperity, with the Yādava King Rāmadevarao extending generous patronage both to scholarship and religion, Jnaneswara found himself heir to the Yogic traditions of the Nāthas and the literary traditions of the Mahānubhāvas—the one providing the foundation of his spiritual career and the other inspiring and helping to guide his literary efforts. Though, in keeping with the traditions of the saints of India, he drew inspiration from all available sources of the time in order to build up his spiritual life, he was, by and large, a Natha, and the community of the Nathas owes not a little to him the popularity and prestige they came to enjoy throughout India in later years.

It so happens that Jnaneswara's teacher was his own elder brother, Nivrittinatha, who also was a Natha. Nivrittinatha had received initiation from Gaihininatha, a disciple of the great Gorakshanatha, and the circumstances in which he did so are well worth recording.

It seems that one day, Nivrittinatha, together with Jnaneswara and other members of the family, had gone out to join his father,

Vitthalpant, in his walk round the Brahmagiri near Tryambakeshwara, which it was the latter's daily practice to undertake, when a tiger fell upon them. While all others escaped and returned home safe, Nivrittinatha was found missing. He was naturally accounted for as lost when he reappeared after a few days and explained how he had escaped. He said he had started running as soon as he saw the tiger, and while looking for a place of safety he sighted a cave into which he entered. There he discovered a great old sage who not only fed him and took good care of him during the days he remained with him, but also helped him achieve spiritual illumination. This sage was Gaihininatha (called so, because he lived in *guhā*, i.e. cave), a direct disciple of Gorakshanatha. Nivrittinatha's transformation of character was so striking that there was no question, but that what he claimed was true, and he was immediately accorded recognition as a saint of a very high order. Jnaneswara himself was so impressed by his brother's character and was so convinced of his great spiritual wisdom that he held him in the highest esteem and eventually accepted him as his teacher, receiving initiation from him.

Jnaneswara's family was distinguished for its outstanding attainments in the sphere of spirituality, and one of Jnaneswara's ancestors, Trimbaknatha (or Trimbakpant), had been a great saint of the Natha community, besides being a disciple of Gorakshanatha. Jnaneswara's father, Vitthalpant, also was a



deeply religious man, having been at one time a full-fledged monk and a very good and correct one, at that.

Vitthalpant began life as Kulkarni (head-man?) of a village—an office his family had held for some generations—and was affluent and very happily married, when his father's death took place, revealing to him the emptiness and impermanence of everything. Completely upset he determined to renounce the world, and with his good wife's consent, left home. After visiting several holy places he, in the end, arrived at Banaras, where he probably met the great Vaishnava saint, Rāmānanda (or, in any case, someone of the same sect). He received initiation from him and, taking orders, began to live in Banaras. Sometime after this his teacher undertook a tour when he visited Ālandi (a holy place) where he met Vitthalpant's young wife who was then staying with her father. He was so moved at the sight of the poor girl pining for her absent husband that, when he returned to Banaras, he commanded Vitthalpant to go back home and to resume the householder's life even at the cost of violating the great and sacred vows he had entered upon. Vitthalpant had not the temerity to disobey his teacher, and, therefore, much against his will, rejoined his wife and began once again the normal life of a householder. In course of time he had four children, Jñaneswara being the second and the most famed and Muktabāi, a daughter, closely following him, both as a mystic and as a poet.

But Vitthalpant had to pay very dearly for leaving monastic life, for he became ostracized. Not only was this an unjust and unprovoked insult to Vitthalpant, but also a denial of those rights and privileges to him which were his by birthright. He found that it was not even open to him to secure the services of a priest to help him invest his children with the sacred thread. At this he was left with no choice but to leave the place, which he did, going over to Nasik, where he settled down.

Even then social persecution did not end

completely, and it continued in some form or other until death, which was not long in coming, delivered him from its grips. The children soon discovered that the ban, which their late father's supposed offence had earned them during his lifetime, was going to continue and they, therefore, decided to go and wait upon the brahmins of Paithana, leaders of the orthodox section of society, to plead for its withdrawal. The brahmins were so impressed by the fine intelligence of the children and their deep spiritual insight that they recognized the injustice they had done to the family and readily agreed to withdraw the ban.

Though still within teens, Jñaneswara had by then achieved full maturity both in his literary and spiritual powers, and very soon he became the central figure in the motley crowd of holy men belonging to different orders who gathered round him. He was, however, most modest, for he said he owed everything to his teacher, Nivrittinatha, who, despite all his limitations, had led him 'beyond both knowledge and ignorance' and had made him 'master of supreme bliss'. 'I was both blind and lame and illusion encircled me, rendering me useless and helpless. Then I met Nivritti who made me sit under a tree and conferred on me the bliss of spiritual knowledge. Blessed be the spiritual knowledge of Nivritti, blessed be the name of God. The fruit of my actions is exhausted, my doubts are dispelled, and all my desires have been fulfilled. . . . My mind is engrossed for ever in divine joy . . . in all directions there is spiritual bliss and everything now appears to be Brahman'. Again: 'I became merged in God. . . . God indeed fills both the outside and inside of everything . . . as one tries to embrace God, one becomes one with Him'. He compared himself to a 'Chātaka' bird, which, he said, could at the most hold in its beak only a few drops of water. Like that bird he had been able to gather only an infinitesimal part of the knowledge which his teacher possessed. Even then it had sufficed to meet his needs and he believed it was



capable of helping many out of the labyrinth of ignorance in which they were struggling and he wanted, therefore, to share it with the world. He himself was very insignificant, but the great teacher had lent part of his greatness to him making him worthy, for 'if the sky is perfectly mirrored in an ocean, can it not also be mirrored, even if inadequately and imperfectly, in a muddy pool?'

Jnaneswara's spiritual experience, as can be seen from the remarks quoted above, was mainly non-dualistic, though it did not exclude by any means dualistic trends altogether. It showed a happy blend of those two elements often foolishly considered irreconcilable, e.g. devotion and knowledge, and this it was which contributed a great deal towards making him so popular and satisfying to large sections of people. It is probable that he owed his non-dualism to the influence of the Nathas among whom he lived and moved most of the time, and his dualism to the influence of the Mahanubhavas whose literature he had studied thoroughly and for whom he had great admiration. It is, however, true to say that, as head of the varied group of holy men who had gathered round him at Pandharpur, he was equally at home in the company of men of all sects and he brought them all together on the common basis that by all means God must be realized.

The great work of Jnaneswara—his *magnum opus*—is *Jñāneśwari*, a commentary on the *Gita* in verse, which, in diction and style, remains unrivalled till today. It is said that Jnaneswara, whose original name was Jnanadeva, derived his name from the name of this book. He dictated the whole book to one Sachchidānanda, who, in gratitude for Jnaneswara's saving his life on one occasion, took it down. A monument at Nevāse on the Godavari marks the exact spot where the composition of the book took place. In the book Jnaneswara appears to be addressing a learned audience, specially his teacher, Nivrittinatha. What exactly the text of the book had been is not known, for it was lost

sight of soon after Jnaneswara's passing away and remained without trace till 1584 when Jnaneswara is reported to have dictated it again to Ekanatha in course of a vision. Ekanatha took it down faithfully, without introducing the least change anywhere for fear that he might thereby change 'a disc of nectar' into an empty 'cocoanut-shell'. The text, as is now extant, contains nine thousand verses.

It is said that Nivrittinatha was not pleased with the work, for it was not original. Jnaneswara, therefore, attempted another work, 'Amritānubhava' or 'Anubhavāmrita' as Jnaneswara preferred to style it. It is a book in which all questions relating to spiritual life are discussed in a very learned manner. It is perhaps the best classical work on philosophy written in Marathi. Jnaneswara himself thought very highly of the book, which he described as an unfailing guide in the midst of the confusion which fills the world. He wrote the book out of a desire to 'serve this dish of spiritual experience so that the whole world might enjoy a general feast'.

His other works are his Abhangas and a book called 'Chāngadeva Pāsashti'. The Abhangas had been known in Marathi literature before Jnaneswara, but it was he who gave them a new impetus, having improved upon all its previous standards. Following his example, other saints of Maharashtra, notably Namadeva, continued to write Abhangas which gradually became very popular.

Jnaneswara travelled fairly widely in North India in company with Namadeva, and on returning to Pandharpur in 1296 he declared his intention to leave his mortal frame. He was barely twenty-one, then. Soon the news spread widely and holy men from far and near began to flock to the place. Jnaneswara named the day when he would pass away. Long before the day people began to sing in praise of God, day and night, surrounding him and he himself also joined with them. At last the fateful day arrived and Jnaneswara passed away in a sitting posture and in full



consciousness. It is said that his teacher and brother Nivrittinatha was present at the spot with others of the family. According to another story, Jnaneswara was buried alive at

his own request. A monument stands at Alandi, marking the spot where he was buried. The monument attracts thousands of pilgrims every year to the village.

## ROLE OF INDIANS IN ANCIENT BURMESE HISTORY

BY DR. DHIRENDRA NATH ROY

Exactly how large that ancient India was we have yet to know. It was essentially a cultural sphere which went by the name of India. According to the geographer Hecataeus of ancient Ionia, the western limit of India appeared to be as far as the Caspian Sea, while its eastern limit was the limit of the earth. A little later the famous Greek historian Herodotus, who travelled extensively in the East, and later still the Alexandrian astronomer Eratosthenes and even Ptolemy gave practically the same configuration of India in their respective maps of the world. As a matter of fact none of these ancient geographers had any idea of the eastern part of India. The Greeks and the Romans, who got their knowledge of the world from this sort of geography, were naturally ignorant of it. Even to the whole Christendom of the early Middle Ages it was practically unknown. It began to be known only after Islam arose and spread east and west as a new cultural power. The Moslem Arabs travelled by sea as far east as the numerous isles of the Pacific. They took the variety of spices and other commodities from there and carried them away to be sold to the West. All these lands were then within the vast cultural sphere of India, and to the West they began to be known as an integral part of it. Even subsequent to the Moslem conquest of some of these lands, the West knew them as such. That is why when Christopher Columbus sailed away to discover a sea route to India and landed in a new continent now called America,

he thought it was India and called its people Indians. Later the countrymen of Columbus, who soon came out in large numbers to this new continent and discovered that the much coveted spices were not there, began to think of India again. One of them named Ferdinand Magellan sailed from there with a good number of his co-adventurers across the vast Pacific Ocean and finally reached a group of islands which they again thought was India and the people of which they called *Indios* or Indians. Only when some of these islands fell into the hands of the *conquistadores*, the entire group was given the name of the Philippines after the name of their king Philip II of Spain.

As to whether the continent of America or any part of it did ever come within the cultural sphere of ancient India there is as yet no established view. Sri Chamanlal, a much travelled Indian author and journalist, seems to hold, upon his careful study of the old Aztec and the Mayan civilizations in Mexico, that it did. He published well-written illustrated articles showing what he called traces of Hindu culture among the ancient people of Mexico. Later he wrote a book on *Hinduism in America* giving many illuminating facts in support of his thesis. In an anthropological magazine called 'Antiquity', I once came across an article by some Western writer giving a similar view. Unfortunately I have lost that copy of the magazine. But this view has not created any great enthusiasm for further investigation even in India, nor



has the world assigned any importance to it. At any rate, there is no doubt that the cultural background of the Philippine group of islands is very much Indian.<sup>1</sup> So is that of many other islands scattered extensively over the south-western end of the Pacific Ocean. It was quite significant that the ancient geographers held that India extended to the furthest end of the East.

Unfortunately our knowledge of the Further India is still very limited, being chiefly, if not wholly, borrowed from some Western research scholars and anthropologists whose kinsmen have got their colonial possessions in this south-eastern region. Their researches in their respective colonial possessions are no doubt valuable. But to us these give only a faint light of the immense cultural riches that remain unexplored. Those of India who have done some work on this field are hardly any better than mere researchers on these researches. Perhaps few of them have ever been on the soil to see and study things for themselves. What we get from their second-hand productions is just a passing sense of pride that we are the children of a great country whose cultural frontiers were once the furthest limit of the East. Perhaps the blighting misfortune of foreign rule enfeebled our natural impetus to delve out the immense riches of our far extensive history. But happily that is now over, and we are free again. It is now one of the urgent tasks of our national government and our free nationals to organize research expeditions to the far-flung reaches of south-east Asia so that the world may know how great our ancient India was. Perhaps India has gone through a long process of even geographical shrinkage in the same manner as we have seen just recently before our very eyes the formation of a politically separate State. In its racial relation, tradition, culture, and spirit this newly carved-out State is an indivisible part of India. Perhaps, time will work to do its part and a future will come when the world

will practically forget what India was before the fifteenth of August 1947.

That south-east Asia is a story of Further India time has begun to tell again. How much further it had been time has yet to tell. But how much nearer it had been to the heart of India perhaps we shall never fully know. For what remains beneath the crust of long ages is only the dry relics of the glorious past, while the heart that bound these regions into a marvellous whole has long been still in us, perhaps as still as dead. Shall it rise again with its ancient vigour to give us the inspiration to understand that lost fraternity?

Of all the regions of south-east Asia, Burma holds a unique position to India. She is closest to her in geographical contiguity. But what is of far greater importance and interest to us is that she is closest to her in cultural affinity.

Since when the Indian culture began to flow into Burma there is no precise information as yet. Burma's past is quite long and rich. How long it is, who can tell? Only the other day I happened to come across a significant statement by the distinguished historian H. G. Wells in his classical production *Outline of History*. Referring to the domestication of poultry in the evolutionary process of world civilization, the author says, 'Up to about 1500 B. C. the only fowls in the world were jungle denizens in India and Burma. . . . Probably poultry were first domesticated in Burma' (p. 110). He also adds that they got to China from Burma about 1100 B. C. Domestication of jungle denizens like fowls presupposes organized human family, perhaps also human society. Evidently Burma had both in that remote past. Furthermore, the fact that about 1100 B. C. these domesticated fowls were exported to China, another great ancient country, suggests some sort of social and cultural relation in that ancient time between these two countries.

But whatever may be the factual value of this singular statement and whatever may it presuppose or suggest, it does not establish the length of Burma's earliest cultural history.

<sup>1</sup> See author's book *The Philippines and India*, published at Manila, 1930.



An isolated fact, with all its cultural bearing, might be an incidental phenomenon rising and dying out without connecting itself backward and forward.

Nevertheless, there are undoubted reasons to believe that Burma's cultural history extends not only to the pre-Christian era but even far to the pre-Buddhist era. Of course, Burma was then not Burma, it was just the eastern extension of India. The rugged hills and mountains in this region formed no effective barriers to the adventurous people of India. Do we not know that the heroes and the heroine of the *Rāmāyaṇa* left their great northern kingdom of Ayodhya and travelled on foot far south, crossing many rugged hills and lofty mountains and passing through the long stretches of the dense Dandaka forests—hundreds of miles—to reach as far as Lanka or modern Ceylon? The heroes of the *Mahābhārata* similarly left their kingdom of Indraprastha (near modern Delhi) and travelled farther and farther east, defying all barriers of hills and dales, of wide rivers and dangerous forests, to visit many interesting places in the extreme end of modern Assam and perhaps even far beyond. If the sons and daughters of royal families, who were brought up in the softness of extraordinary comfort and luxury, could thus travel from the north-end to the south-end of the country, from the north-west far far to the east, other people who were naturally accustomed to hard life would scarcely recoil from any such adventures. For Indians with such stimulating traditions it was nothing unusual if they came to ancient Burma overland or by sea in quest of new and better fortunes. They did come to Burma through whatever route they could find or make and settle among the native inhabitants to spread and develop their civilization in friendly association with the latter.

What the *Maha Yazawin* or the Royal Chronicle, especially the Chronicle of the Glass Palace, tells us about it may have some uncanny flash of imagery according to the modern standard of historical writings, but still its earliest accounts reveal many brilliant

facts that have unmistakable bearings upon the ancient culture of the land. Behind the apparently ornamental accounts, which some Western writers dismiss rather buoyantly as 'fantasies like those of the Arabian Nights' or 'monkish fiction', there are pointed historical truths too precious for a fair knowledge of these people's past to be lightly cast away. At all events, whatever may be the assessment of the foreign historians as regards the reliability of the Burmese national history called the *Maha Yazawin*, nobody has ever disputed the fact that the essential features of the culture and civilization which developed in Burma from its very beginning are Indian.

Apart from the rich records of the royal chroniclers there have been concrete evidences of the Indian background from a few archaeological excavations made in some of the ancient cultural sites of the country, such as Tagaung, Hmawza, Pegu, etc. It is a pity that the little excavation work done so far has barely touched the immense riches of high historical value that lie buried underneath the surface, and yet the work has been discontinued due, it is said, to lack of funds. It seems the interest of the British rulers in Burma had been rather lukewarm in this field,—a fact which hardly went to their credit. The same wonderful interest as revealed itself in the highly expensive and arduous excavations in the ancient regions of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and Chaldea should have urged the enlightened British people to undertake a similar task in Burma. But they did not do it. Was it because in the former case the rich findings of those dead and buried civilizations, which seem to bear some connection with the background of the existing Western civilization, make some sort of circuitous contribution to the mock pride and prestige of the West while similar findings in Burma might give the subjugated people of India and Burma a fresh fillip to quicken their 'inconvenient' national consciousness? Anyway the British rulers are now gone. It behoves now the independent national governments of India and Burma to take joint



interest in the latter's archaeological exploration and reveal to the lasting glory of both countries the forgotten facts and their chronological relations which together with the wantonly pooh-poohed Royal Chronicles may make out a fairly comprehensive history of what has long been declared as the legendary and prehistoric period. For, even the few excavations so far done and done perhaps half-heartedly have already thrown much light upon what has been obscure and nebulous.

When we talk about the Indian background of Burmese cultural history we mean the old Indian civilization as developed by the genius of the Aryan people together with the liberal infusion of the indigenous non-Aryan traditions, beliefs, and customs. This means that before the Aryan civilization arose and spread there were in different parts of India local and regional systems of non-Aryan culture in more or less developed forms. Burma too originally had some such form of indigenous culture developed by its scattered autochthonous or earliest immigrant people. Possibly it was based on some simple form of animism, perhaps something more than that. There are Burmese scholars who seem to hold this view for certain, though the ground for it is not very clear. But it gets its reasonable support from Wells' view of the earliest domestication of poultry and its export outside Burma. Besides, it is an established fact known to all that the Indian civilization by its very nature had never sought to impose itself upon any people but had been voluntarily admitted to enrich and flourish over their ways of life. This obviously presupposes some sort of indigenous culture preparatory to the reception of a well developed culture from outside. Unlike the Western civilization which throughout its history has been imposed upon others by cruel political conquest and has thus been the tragic cause of the gradual extinction of a variety of culture systems and small races of people, Indian civilization had spread through a peaceful socializing process in which both the giver

and the receiver were practically unaware as to how they came to be the common sharers of it. From the earliest time the Indian people came to Burma overland and by sea, lived side by side with the original people, carried on trade with them, and along with their trade articles they invariably carried also their ideas, beliefs, and customs, in short their culture to them. The native people certainly had a fair modicum of culture which enabled them to appreciate and welcome the new comer. For otherwise the meeting of the two would have caused either a violent conflict fatal for one or the other, or a complete withdrawal from one another. The high degree of understanding necessary to appreciate the great imported culture was already there developed in them by their own original system. Exactly of what nature that earliest Burmese culture was there is, however, no record or relic to tell us.

It is difficult to say since when the Indian culture, with its central home in Northern India, began to spread into Burma. Perhaps it began during the heroic ages of India, the ages of the two great epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, or perhaps even earlier. It spread into remote places as the heroes of these epics travelled far from north to south and from west to east. The *Mahābhārata* tells us that the Pāndavas came far to the east. One of them, Bhima, married a demon princess named Hidimbā somewhere in modern Cachar, while, Arjuna, his younger brother, married princess Chitrāngadā of Manipur. This goes to show that they not only visited such far eastern parts of India but even established close social relationship with the people. The ancient kingdom of Manipur extended far to the east, including part of Upper Burma, and Arjuna might have had some post-connubial sojourn in some places of it. In the Kabaw valley of Upper Burma there is an ancient tank near Mawlaik which is associated with the name of Arjuna. This 'Arjuna tank' might have been excavated at his time to commemorate his new social tie with the people of Manipur, or sometime after. But



it has unmistakably existed through long ages as the sweet symbol of ancient India's relation with the land of Burma.

The *Maha Yazawin*, which forms some sort of a digest of the earliest annals of Burma, seems to connect the Burmese kings with Lord Manu, whom the Indian mythology makes the first progenitor of mankind and from whom the name '*mānava*' or 'man' was

derived. The Burmese kings, as all the Shākya or Solar kings of India, are considered to be the direct descendants of Manu, the great *Mahathamada*. The Burmese kings are thus closely linked with the Indian Shākya dynasty to which the Lord Buddha belonged. How the Burmans came to hold this view as a historical fact will be understood as we proceed.

(*To be continued*)

## THE IDEA OF FREEDOM

BY PRABAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

I am essentially free; for, all necessity applies to objects of my knowledge, to my individual ego, intelligence, mind, life, body, and the perceptual world about me. If I can free myself from my not-Self, the world of objects, that is to say, if I can know necessity-bound objects as objects of knowledge distinct from my Self as the knowing subject, I can be free. The consciousness of necessity in the not-Self is freedom of the Self, for it is only by contrasting its own state with that of the not-Self can the Self really appreciate its freedom.

And the Self can know its objects as distinct from itself as subject precisely because there is necessity in the objects. If there were no law operating in the objective world of ego, intelligence, mind, body, and the material universe, there would be no knowledge of it but merely a bare awareness of it. In such a bare awareness of haphazard appearances the subject cannot distinguish itself from the object with which it tends to confuse itself. The necessary principles ruling the world of appearances (in the form of categories, concepts, or formulas) are also the principles of objectivity. The sciences discover these principles, principles of sociology, psychology, biology, and physical sciences; and so far as the sciences succeed in discovering these principles they define

objective fields of study. The more the sciences are perfect the more is the scientist conscious of his knowing 'self' as distinct from the object of knowledge, and so, distinct from the necessity that operates in the latter. The successive grades of knowledge of necessity in the objects of knowledge signify successive grades of awareness of freedom of the 'self' that knows.

But the sciences are not perfect as yet. They have discovered necessary laws in the spheres of matter, body, mind, intelligence, and ego in the order of decreasing perfection. This corresponds with a decreasing order in the consciousness of freedom as we pass from contemplation of matter to the ego. In so far as we fail to know the necessary laws ruling the ego, we confuse our Self with the ego, and so, suffer the necessity which belongs really to the latter and not to the former. The necessity ruling the ego can be known by researches in social sciences which, however, is partly dependent on the psychological, biological, and physical sciences. The ego-sense is no longer confused with the knowing 'self' when we know the ego as an object, just as the mental joys and sorrows are not considered as pertaining to my 'self' when I know my mental states as objects. The primitive man, like a child, considered even the natural objects about him as autonomous



agents because he could not discover any mechanism in Nature; and he would have confused Nature with his own 'self' had the former not openly run counter to his egotistic wishes. If natural appearances followed our wishes, we would have believed them to be but extensions of our ego (and so, of our Self, the ego being confused with the Self at this state of un-Self-consciousness). Such extreme confusions occur in certain pathological conditions of the mind. Generally, in a normal mind of our age, the ego is confused with the Self for, we do now know fully this individual acting and enjoying 'self' which is the ego. The knowing 'self' (which is *the* Self) transcends this ego, though it is reflected on the latter. That such is the case can be understood only by a realization of the knowing 'self', this subject in all knowledge, as it is self-revealed and revealing objects including the ego. It cannot be known as an object, for, while knowing it as such one still has to be a subject; but it cannot be doubted, for, while doubting it one has to be a subject that doubts. This subject, this 'I' that knows and is at the back of all judgments, can only be asserted and be aware of. That it transcends the ego may at first be taken on trust from the mystics who have realized it. Later one may have a direct intuition of it if one so wishes and follows the directions of the mystics regarding this.

That there is a possible truth in the existence of a transcendental Self that is always the subject can be guessed from a certain experience, viz. that of illusion. When we perceive a snake in a rope we are conscious of the subject as distinct from the snake and as knowing the latter. But as soon as the illusion breaks we are conscious of the subject as a knowing 'self' independent of the object, for, now we can neither say that we knew the rope nor that we knew the snake (while the illusory perception lasted). We knew, but there was no object of our knowledge. Thus our attention is turned towards our knowing 'self' as revealing and self-revealed, i.e. as a self-subsistent subject, the Spirit. We disown

a feeling of fear in the presence of the snake as not really felt but only suffered by accident and error and we are aware for a while of our knowing 'self'. Aesthetic illusion, in the form of aesthetic semblance and aesthetic sympathy, ends in making us more conscious of our Self. This is tragic catharsis which is but self-awareness through suffering of pain not really mine.

The experience of illusion and the assertions of the mystics offer hints as to the existence of the transcendental Self beyond our ego with its intellectual, psychical, and physical correlates. Our inherent and absolute love of freedom, which is an indirect proof of the possibility of freedom, leads us to realize this 'self' and this freedom co-natural with the Self. But to realize it we have to contemplate our ego and know the necessity ruling it. We have to study our active and enjoying ego through introspection. Further, we have to study the society which is indissolubly interrelated with the ego. Thus the individual ego can be completely known as an object apart from the subject when our knowledge of the social, biological, psychological, and physical sciences are complete. Then can we know the necessity in the ego, and knowing this, can we be aware of the freedom of our 'self' that knows this necessity. Then we will not confuse our Self with the ego and will not illusorily feel the necessity that is in the ego as binding the Self. Thus the realization of the reality of the Self as the free subject of all knowledge of necessity-bound objects is also realization of absolute freedom.

But this freedom is realized in contemplation. It is achieved through dissociating the 'self' from the objects with which it is ignorantly confused. The 'self' so realized is the contemplative 'self', a mere witness of the play of Nature. It is not active, for contemplation is not activity but a spontaneity. The Self reveals objects. Intelligence is active in exploring truth, which when arrived at, is intuited by the 'self' that is the sole knower. Intelligence and other mental faculties and



sense-organs act to remove the wrappings that veil an object. And these psychical and physical activities are themselves known by the 'self'. So, that knowing or contemplating is no activity in the proper sense. Yet it is no passivity, for, the 'self' is ever wakeful like a steady flame. In dreamless sleep, when all our psychical processes stop, the 'self' keeps its constant vigil, so that on waking we do not lose the continuity of our 'self' and we say 'I slept well'. Thus the 'self', though absolutely free, is neither active nor passive. We, however, wish to taste freedom as active agents. For this we have to act on Nature (including human nature), the object of our knowledge, knowing fully the necessity that operates in it. We can change Nature only by knowing and using the laws of Nature. Instead of magic we have to master science. But a mere knowledge of the means to change Nature will not give us active freedom; we must also know what to change. That is, we must have a notion of our ideal. Our politicians, physicists, psychologists, and other expert scientists do great harm to society simply because they have mastered some means of changing Nature while lacking adequate knowledge of the end to be achieved. This end must be perfect freedom for all, which implies real happiness for all. And this can only be achieved through Self-knowledge, so that if we want to taste freedom in action we have to work for a change in the physical and human nature in the right direction, that which leads to conditions promoting Self-knowledge in men and women. In one word, we have to be humble servants of humanity and must possess two equipments: first, the knowledge of necessary laws working in Nature (including society, individual mind-body system, and the physical world); second, the knowledge of the end to be achieved by humanity. To change the world for mere material enjoyment to human beings is as demoniacal as to change it for their destruction. The materialistic teachings of social scientists and psychologists of today are scrappy and short-

sighted endeavours to improve the world. These ardent spirits are dark prophets who lead men into blind alleys and soon bring them against baffling confusion and chaos. Any interference with Nature without a thorough grasp of the end to be achieved is dangerous. Knowledge of Nature, that is, science, is a power which is forbidden by the religious teachers, precisely because such a power is not innocuous unless combined with a knowledge of what to do with it, that is, with Self-knowledge which is the same as God realization.

To attain true freedom in contemplation is therefore a prerequisite for attaining freedom in action, and only a liberated self, a *bodhisattva*, working for universal salvation can experience both these forms of freedom. It is obvious that such a worker can have no egotistic interest in his work; he does this in a spirit of detachment, not even out of any sentiment for humanity. He does this for he knows that his own 'self' is one with the universal Self, and it is a part of his loving duty to help people to discriminate the universal Self (in each human 'self') from its entanglements with Nature, from material chaos and mental effects. Such a social worker looks on his fellow-beings as his very own and finds in their liberation the perfect realization of his freedom. It is not for the sake of his ego that he works for humanity, it is for his own 'self' which is essentially the universal Self or Absolute Spirit. So, his work can be said to be strictly neither selfless nor selfish, neither altruistic, led by sentiments which bind the soul nor egotistic, led by infatuation which also binds the soul. Thus only can an enlightened social worker realize perfect and essential freedom through action which is ordinarily a fetter to the soul.

The freedom thus conceived is no abstraction and it does not involve world-forsaking or negation of life. One's individual freedom is organically related with the freedom of all; so the lover of freedom is no escapist or recluse. He does not covet material and



mental pleasures, yet he enjoys matter and mind like the witness of a play. And he works for such improvements in matter and mind (i.e. physical and psychological developments) as may help man in his progress towards Self-realization. He works for the eradication of extreme poverty and class difference and their products, of mutual distrust and conflicts which are not congenial to spiritual progress. He endeavours to change the mind and the material environment of man only to help him in the path of freedom. And this universal freedom, when achieved, will not change men into dry ascetics but will make them happy and true enjoyers of the good things of Nature and life, of matter and mind. Their enjoyment of these objects will be free from infatuation that binds the soul to the objects and enslaves it, leading it to sorrow. This enjoy-

ment will be full of lucidity and freedom that marks aesthetic delight; it will be a beatitude experienced by the wise witness of an intriguing game or an absorbing drama, the witness who, while appreciating all the variety of feelings, feels them not, for he *knows* them as mere waves of effects undulating his mind. A wise man knows his real Self as a free subject that *knows* its actions, feelings, and thoughts, so that the latter are contemplatively enjoyed and not blindly indulged in. Therefore, they cannot bind him. He lives freely and enjoys freely the worldly goods; yet he, in one sense, lives not, nor enjoys anything, for he but contemplates his natural mind-body with the ego-sense living and enjoying. His real joy is in knowing, for his 'self' is essentially the subject that knows. And he enjoys absolute freedom while outwardly living the life of an ordinary man.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Sister Nivedita, the brilliantly gifted disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who needs no introduction, was a sincere and indefatigable worker in the cause of Indian women. A *Letter of Sister Nivedita* was an 'open letter', addressed by her to Indian women, and sent to the organizers of a ladies' meeting which she was to have addressed on a particular date, but had to postpone doing so owing to unforeseen circumstances. . . .

Swami Prabhavananda, who writes on *The Ideal of Renunciation*, is the Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, U.S.A. . . .

*The Power of Silence* by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, will be read with deep interest and much profit. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

Dr. Mohan Lal Sethi, D.Sc., writes briefly

on a familiar, yet thought-provoking theme—*Rama and Krishna*. . . .

Continuing his superb study of the lives and teachings of the mystics and poet-saints of Maharashtra, Swami Lokeshwarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission writes this month on *Saint Jnaneshwara*—one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. . . .

The study of the spread of Indian civilization and culture in Further India, South-East Asia, and the Pacific World has received but little attention so far from students and scholars. India and Burma have not only a great and glorious cultural affinity but also long-standing and intimate ties of friendship, common interests, and good-neighbourly relations. Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy, M.A., Ph.D., learned author and lecturer, writing in lucid and vigorous language, makes an admirable study of the *Role of Indians in Ancient*



*Burmese History.* Dr. Roy, formerly of the Philippine Government University and of the University College, Mandalay, has travelled widely and conducted extensive research work in the field. . . .

Sri Prabas Jivan Chaudhury, M.Sc., P.R.S., draws attention to the deeper metaphysical implications of *The Idea of Freedom*.

### SCIENCE AND CLASSICS

Man does not live by bread alone. He lives for certain permanent values of life and strives to realize them. His 'struggle for existence' on the physical plane, his attempts at realizing mundane ideals and values is obvious on the surface. But that is not all. He aspires to attain something far higher than these. When his physical needs are satisfied to a reasonably large extent, his inherent, though apparently dormant, intellectual cravings and emotional urges, in other words, his need for mental and moral values, become predominant. But even these, after a time, fail to appease the acute spiritual hunger of the soul, fail to satisfy the demand for perfect peace and bliss. Consequently man seeks after transcendental spiritual values. As he is a combination of body, mind, and Spirit, man's needs are also threefold. At different times, according to the varying conditions in which he is placed, man feels the immediate need for and importance of one or the other of these threefold values. But in society, where individuals are at different levels, on different planes of existence, there is always a necessity to maintain a balance between the three types of values—material, mental, and spiritual. Such balanced life alone can ensure all-round progress for the individual and the community.

The role of science and technology, which cater in main to the physical comforts of man, has so far been rather overstressed to the exclusion of other life values. It was therefore not without significance that the learned delegates at the recent All-India Oriental Conference (held at Lucknow) emphasized the role of classics as a sustainer of cultural and

spiritual values. India does need science and technology for her material advancement. And she also needs, to a greater degree, the values that will enable her sons and daughters to build their cultural life on sound and lasting foundations. In the course of his inaugural address to the Oriental Conference, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said:

'No one can deny the practical utility of science and technology, or over-emphasize the need of our making the utmost use of modern discoveries in order to raise the standard of life of our people. But while bearing this in mind we have to remember that in this world of today which is for the most part wedded to the goal of material prosperity, it would be a tragedy if due attention were not paid to what is commonly called oriental culture'.

India has a distinctive spiritual culture of her own to maintain and to develop and to draw nourishment from. She has also a specific contribution to make to the great advance of the civilization of the world. The dictate of wisdom not to run blindly after alien economic and political nostrums and novelties, to the neglect of what constitutes the age-long true spirit of Indian culture, cannot be lost sight of. Stressing this point, in all its bearings, Prof. Nilakantha Sastri, who delivered the Presidential Address at the Conference, observed:

'But in our new and necessary enthusiasm for Science and Technology, we shall do well not to expect too much of them in the construction of the new order. India will lose much, and the world gain little, if we succeed in producing an Indian replica of British or American industrialism'. . . .

'India has most to gain for herself and for the world by maintaining her identity, the ethos of her own time-honoured culture, and by renovating its moorings in the basic values of Satya, Dharma, Ahimsa, Asanga and so on, which have been impaired, but by no means snapped by generations of foreign rule; she must regain her freedom of spirit, and seek out her own solutions of her problems, material and moral, instead of running after alien models or depending too much on foreign aid'.

Of course, the ancient solutions have to be adapted to modern conditions, without jeopardizing the health of the national soul.



Describing the role of classics in this respect, Prof. Sastri said:

'A primary pre-requisite for such vital developments is the restoration of our classics to a place of honour in our educational system, and the planning and steady pursuit of their study and interpretation in the light of present requirements' . . . .

'But the classics must have a place of honour for more profound reasons. If we wished to go back to the roots of our culture, so necessary for balanced progress, we must study the Sanskrit literature. This did not mean that there should be a revival of the past. The future must needs be different from the past. But a study of the classics would enable us to know the old tradition'.

Prof. Sastri also pointed out how classics are nursed and interpreted anew every generation in the West in order to derive inspiration for the building up of the nation on the past foundations, and made a plea for the stirring up of a like interest in Indian classics on the part of Indians.

The importance of safe-guarding the integrity of national consciousness was rightly pointed out by Acharya Narendra Dev, in the course of his address at the Conference. He said:

'We are lacking in self-knowledge and so long as we do not feel secure as regards the integrity of our national self we cannot take big decisions and risks and meet the challenge of our times. A nation that has no history of its own, that is, does not know itself has lost its soul and can gain nothing from knowledge borrowed from others unless it recovers it'.

It has to be borne in mind that though science, in its role as the handmaid of industry and technology, has its advantages as well as limitations, in its other important role—as an instrument of arriving at truth, as a *pramāṇa*—it has a great and useful part to play. Whenever and in whatever field any truth has been discovered, consciously or unconsciously, the 'scientific attitude' has inspired the discoverer. As Sri Jawaharlal Nehru has drawn attention, in his message to the Conference:

'We live in an age in which science and the applications of science dominate the world and fill men's thoughts. We cannot do without science or its applications, for they represent human progress and indeed without them, we can neither

maintain our independence or hope to achieve any decent standard of life.

'Apart from this, science, if properly pursued, should develop the right frame of mind for the search for truth, the scientific temper which does not get swept away by passion or prejudice or by some slogan of the day, by inherited tradition or the latest gadget, but can preserve a certain equanimity and fearlessness in that search for truth'.

A schism in the soul is worse than any other misfortune that may befall man. This has to be provided against in man's great adventure through life. And it may safely be asserted that a harmonious combination of science and classics, which is the necessity of our age, has got to be achieved in every part of the world.

### FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESS

Man is not only not a mere animal but something infinitely more than that. He is the Spirit, a divine being, having a body and mind. Every aim and every pursuit in life must be made the means of realizing this truth of the divinity of man and his unity with the entire universe. Every individual ardently desires success in any walk of life he pursues, and strives his utmost to achieve it. But often he lacks faith in himself and forgets that the source of all strength and ability, the foundation of all success, is within him, is in the Atman which is omniscient and omnipotent. Sooner or later everyone will have to manifest the divinity that is inherent in him. The more we are awakened to the consciousness of God within ourselves and within every other being the greater shall be the amount of success we achieve. The more we manifest the divinity within, the more do we unfold the power of the Atman that lies in a potential form within every one of us and the greater shall be our all-round ability successfully to deal with the problems of life. In short, spirituality expresses itself in character, and it is in exalted character that the foundations of success lie. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'What we want are energy, love of independence, spirit of self-reliance,



immovable fortitude, dexterity in action, bond of unity of purpose, and thirst for improvement'.

Success is the key-note of all progress in individual and collective life. The main feature of modern civilization is the struggle for power—the struggle to gain power and the struggle to keep it intact,—and this struggle is carried on under various ostensible aims and in diverse apparently justifiable ways. But the supreme task of civilization remains yet to be achieved, viz. how to make man happier and live a better life, *not* how to exploit man and destroy life? If one is not to elbow out others and run directly after fame, or to seek easy advantage by fair means or foul at the cost of others, and yet win a well deserved victory, what are the qualifications for achieving such meritorious success in any walk of life?

'The qualifications for achieving success are intellectual and moral honesty, courage, independence of thought, fairness, good sense, sound judgment, perseverance, resourcefulness, ingenuity, orderliness, application, accuracy, and endurance.

'Dealing with men, he should have the ability to co-operate, to organize, to analyse situations and conditions, to formulate problems, and to direct the effort of others. He should know how to inform, convince, and win confidence by skilful and right use of facts. He should be alert, ready to learn, open-minded but not credulous. He must be able to assemble facts, to investigate thoroughly, to discriminate clearly between assumption and proven knowledge.

'He should be a man of faith, one who perceives both difficulties and ways to surmount them. He must be a student throughout his career and keep abreast of human progress'.

The above exhilarating passage was quoted by Sri C. Rajagopalachari in the course of his inaugural address to the World Power Conference. Power of organization and the ever expanding knowledge of science have already conferred immense boons on mankind and have opened up innumerable vistas to man's further progress. But the triumphs of science, while affording man every conceivable facility for success, do not

seem to have invested him with the necessary qualifications for making judicious use of those facilities. 'In the earth there still exists a vast store of material riches waiting to be appropriated', says Dr. L. P. Jacks, 'but the immaterial treasure that lies buried in *man*, waiting for development, is immeasurably greater'. The longing for success is universal. But the longing for being worthy of success, though more important, is not half so common. The stable foundations of success will have been well and truly laid if and when man learns to take greater care of the means than the end and hearkens to the voice of wisdom, 'Thy place in life is seeking after thee; therefore, be thou at rest from seeking after it'.

### TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

'A leader is born, not made'—is an oft-repeated saying. Yet, there appear to be more 'leaders' all around than there are persons to be led. It is not unknown to many that none can be a successful leader by merely developing a will to power and gaining influence through wealth or rank. In the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'One must be *dāsasya dāsah*—a servant of servants—and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth and secondly, unselfish—that's a leader'. True and positive leadership is distinguished by character, patience, and perseverance. The sincere longing to love and serve man, irrespective of personal predilections and discriminatory distinctions, is the lofty incentive that stirs the individual earnestly to seek to acquire such qualities which mark him out as a leader of men. Those who have been successful in inspiring and revolutionizing the minds and hearts of millions are no other than they who possess a gigantic will and unwavering faith and who have wrought a revolution in their own lives. The noble ideals which prompt men to unselfish activity and love that seeks no return have to be persistently cherished and followed throughout life in



order to lay the secure foundations of the best training for sound and effective leadership.

That the future of healthy democratic leadership in India is closely bound up with the kind of education imparted to our youth and is directly dependent upon the training of character to be achieved in the process of education, by the discipline of the body, the will, and intelligence, was rightly emphasized by Sri Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, in the course of his illuminating Address delivered at the last Convocation of the Delhi University. Deploring the sense of despair and despondency that seems to have overtaken the youth of our land, especially in the present context, he observed:

'With the introduction of universal suffrage, leadership cannot be claimed as a matter of right by them. The present age requires a new type of leadership—a type of leadership different from what we have been accustomed to all along. As it is trenchantly put by Sir Walter Moberly in an address which he recently delivered in the University of St. Andrews: "The modern university is neither a training ground for a leisured class nor for the training of an elite of gifted individuals".'

'Leadership in a democratic society must necessarily take a new form. It cannot be claimed as of right, but education for social responsibilities is still a task of our universities'.

Any training for leadership, worth the name, can never fail to inspire in the individual due regard for the larger interests of the community, the country, and the world as a whole. A leader must be in touch with the dynamic forces that move men's hearts and thereby mould society. He who possesses an indomitable will, a courageous disposition, and fearless faith in himself can be a great leader. One who is animated by a spirit of renunciation and service and who has, in abundance, love, self-sacrifice, and simplicity of life, is alone worthy of leadership. The strength and greatness of a nation are dependent on its leaders of exalted character and stupendous personality. A nation that lacks real leaders in sufficient number is at a greater disadvantage than a nation that is able to give birth to efficient leaders in quick succession, and, like a rud-

derless boat in stormy waves, drifts helplessly on, constantly running the risk of meeting with disaster.

Quoting the immortal words of Plato, viz. 'States are made not from rocks and trees but from the character of their citizens which turn the scale and draw everything after them', and recalling the great Upanishadic saying—'*sahanāvavatu, saha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam karavāvahai, tejasvināvadhitamastu, mā vidviṣāvahai*', Sri Alladi Krishnaswami laid special stress on the importance of a liberal education and the cultivation of moral and spiritual values in any scheme of training for national and international leadership. Since education has a great part to play in moulding the youth of today into the leaders of tomorrow, he drew the pointed attention of the student community and said:

'You must make a point of giving of your best to the service of your country and help the development of a higher type of society. Above all, you must remember your obligations to the teeming millions of our country who are underfed and under-clothed. In public life, beware, you do not appeal to the lower feelings of your fellow countrymen; you must cultivate a genuine patriotism which is above caste, creed, or geographic or linguistic divisions. Do not fall into the snare of having one rule of conduct for public life and another for private life.

'Be always guided by the feeling that you must contribute your mite to the output of human knowledge. Do realize that no great achievement is possible unless you dedicate yourself to the service of any profession, art, or science you might pursue. Excellence in any sphere is a divine attribute according to the saying of our Lord—Sri Krishna. If you study the lives of great men, you will realize that it is not so much dazzling brilliance that counts ultimately, but it is a certain steadfastness, doggedness, and determination of purpose, a downright integrity and a reliability in daily dealings that marked their career. Life is a real and earnest affair. Be guided in everything that you do by the feeling that all study is intended for the enlightenment of the mind and the illumination of the soul. Cultivate a spirit of fearlessness. Develop a spirit of manliness and confidence in yourself in all your actions and remember the saying of the Upanishads on which Swami Vivekananda laid stress, "*Utiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata*"'



(Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached)'.

Infinite love, infinite faith, and infinite sacrifice are the hall-mark of worthy leadership. The leader has to take upon himself, willingly, voluntarily, and cheerfully, all the burden of suffering and responsibility without

a word of hate or condemnation. For, 'he who is the servant of all is their true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**HINDU CULTURE.** By K. GURU DUTT. Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263, Hornby Road, Bombay. Pages 254. Price Rs. 4-8.

The author's study in Hindu culture is an examination in the light of eternal verities or values—the *puruṣārtha* as he calls them—of the perennial culture within which and by which we, Hindus, live and have been living through centuries past. Throughout, in the presentation of his thesis, the author proves himself a versatile scholar and thinker—a rare combination in these degenerate days,—with a freshness and confidence of outlook born out of the ripeness of experience in things spiritual. He, however, apprehends that his stand 'which partakes of the character of a half-way house between orthodoxy and science, runs the risk of being disowned by both, the one rejecting it as new-fangled stuff, and the other brushing it aside as out-of-date medievalism' (p. 194). There is, of course, a chance of misunderstanding original minds in their approach to and assimilation of authoritative truths embodied in the Vedas, the Tantras, and such other enigmatic texts. It is notorious how even the great Shankaracharya has been dubbed a crypto-Buddhist (*pracchanna bauddha*). Originality, therefore, must vindicate itself by analysing our 'concept of living' in the light of first-hand spiritual experience. Hence it is that we find Shankaracharya emphatically declaring: '*Na dharmajijñāsāyāmi va śrutyādaya eva pramāṇam brahmajijñāsāyām, kintu śrutyādayo' nūbhavādayaśca yathāsambhavam iha pramāṇam, anūbhavāvasānatvād bhūtavastu-viśayat-vācca brahmajijñāsanasya*' (*Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya*, I. i. 2). The author too takes pains to vindicate his stand by breathing into the old texts the breath of life emerging out of the vision of a mystic. The conclusions which follow from Sri Dutt's searching and brilliant analysis of our concept of living contain many important and fruitful suggestions for far-reaching and necessary changes in various domains of our national life—specially in the sphere of education. Undoubtedly it is a stimulating and thoughtful book, worthy to be in the hands of every Hindu, or for the matter of that, every one interested in comparative religion and culture.

But the otherwise calm, philosophical poise, irradiating and unifying the thesis of the book is marred by the author's sweeping and uncalled-for animadversion upon Advaita Vedānta. He writes thus, referring to the familiar doctrine of Maya: '... That rejection of the actual world of phenomena as unreal, a notion which has, as it were, cast a pall over the mind of Indian and induced a pernicious anaemia of the spirit through the centuries, with all its ghastly consequences, political and other' (p. 143). This is perverse judgment, if nothing else, for, even a tiro of Vedānta knows that the illusoriness of the phenomenal world only means that there is a 'lapse of value' from the standpoint of the unique height of Pure Experience, that is to say, Experience unstressed by Will in the ordinary sense of effort and want; and this is a felt fact, testified to by mystics and saints of all ages and climes, not to speak of Vedāntins.

MAKHANLAL MUKHERJI

**CLASSICAL INDIAN SCULPTURE.** By CHINTAMONI KAR. Published by Alec Tiranti Ltd., 72, Charlotte Street, London, W. 1. Pages 38 and 86 Illustrations. Price 6s.

It is a nice little handbook, professing to describe the development of Indian sculpture 'from the time of the Mauryan dynasty, which flourished in the fourth century B.C., until the time of the Gupta dynasty in the fifth century A.D.'. The subject is vast and the small number of pages hardly suffice to do full justice to it. The author himself does not claim to have given any 'detailed information'. However, he has eminently succeeded in his mission, viz. to 'introduce' the reader to 'classical Indian sculpture'.

The book has been divided into nine sections: section I gives an historical outline of the development of Indian sculpture, and the succeeding ones respectively deal with the Early Icons and Maurya Art, Sunga Art, Bharhut Stupa, Sanchi, Gandhara School, Mathura School, Amaravati, and Gupta Art. The book is profusely illustrated—various pictures having been selected principally because of their artistic value. The author has also referred to their salient features in the Descriptive



Notes. A useful bibliography and a map marking the sites of ancient monuments have added to its value.

There are, however, certain statements which would not meet with general acceptance; e.g. the assertion that Kanishka (I?) reigned for 42 years (pp. 3 and 19), or that Chandragupta (I?) 'brought the whole of Northern India except the Punjab under his sway'. These facts, however, do not detract from the value of the book. The printing, especially of the Illustrations, and get-up are highly admirable.

R. K. DIKSHIT

THREE GREAT SAGES. BY KEWAL MOTWANI. Published by Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Ltd., Madras 17. Pages 45. Price Re. 1.

This well got-up brochure contains short but vivid sketches of Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Annie Besant, and J. Krishnamurti by the well-known author and lecturer Sri Kewal Motwani, who gave them as radio talks broadcast from Radio Ceylon. The writer has had intimate acquaintance with all the three distinguished persons whose lives and teachings he has sought so lucidly and yet succinctly to portray, with a profound understanding of their spiritual message for India and the world.

#### BENGALI

VEDANTA-DARSHANA (Vol. I: *Catuhśūtri*). TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY SWAMI VISHWARUPANANDA. Published by Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta 3. Pages 242. Price Rs. 3.

Vedanta is the sublimest expression of the intellect, the heart, and the spirit of India. It is not a mere scholastic system of metaphysics. Every book which seeks to popularize Vedanta and to bring its essential and universal truths and arguments within the power of comprehension of ordinary people is therefore cordially welcome. Books intended for the scholarly readers are, of course, no less welcome.

The book under review, dealing with the well-known 'Vedanta Sūtras' and their commentaries, is happily intended for both classes of readers. It contains original masterly commentaries on Vedanta as well as expositions of them in simple Bengali understandable to uninitiated truth-seekers. The following are the principal contents of the book: (1) Brahma-Sūtras—the first four Sūtras; (2) Explanation of the Sūtras in simple Sanskrit; (3) Explanation of the Sūtras in simple Bengali; (4) *Vaiyāsika-Nyāyamālā* of Bhāratī Tirtha; (5) Exposition of *Nyāyamālā* in simple Sanskrit; (6) Exposition of *Nyāyamālā* in simple Bengali; (7) the commentary of Shankaracharya; (8) the translation of Shankara's commentary in chaste Bengali, with Notes clarifying complex sentences and technical

words; (9) the *Bhāṣya-Ratnaprabhā-Tikā* of Ramananda Saraswati; and (10) a lucid and elaborate annotation in Bengali, by Swami Vishwarupananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, named *Bhāva-dīpikā*, throwing much light on every topic, every argument, every notable idea, and every important word of the Sūtras, of Shankara Bhāṣya, and the other commentaries. The purport of every *adhikaraṇa* and every Sūtra is clearly pointed out, the relation of every argument to what precedes and what follows is distinctly shown, the progress of the discussion on every point is convincingly demonstrated.

The book is introduced by a preamble, called *Nivedana*. In it the translator has, within a short compass and in simple Bengali, given a clear idea of the historical, philosophical, and religious background of Vedanta, explained the special features and importance of Shankara's Advaita-vāda with reference to the other systems based on Vedanta, and presented the substance of each of the four main chapters of the Vedanta Darshana. The volume under review is the first of the series on the great system, and it deals with the explanations of the first four Sūtras (of the first *pāda* of the first *adhyāya*). But the most important and fundamental problems of Vedanta are dealt with in this Volume. These problems are stated in the Contents.

The *Bhāva-dīpikā* is really a valuable contribution, in Bengali, to Vedanta literature. It reveals the annotator's sound scholarship, penetrating insight, most patient and persevering research, and rare capacity to simplify the most abstruse subjects. What is particularly remarkable is that he has put the most subtle arguments of the Bhāṣya and the Tikās in the plainest language possible. He has thus rendered valuable service to the culture of Vedanta in the country. Scholars will be delighted to find that the learned annotator has not left untouched a single point of fundamental importance, while those whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not sufficiently adequate for the study of the original commentaries will be gratified to find that they are not thereby deprived of the right to be conversant with the great truths of Vedanta Philosophy.

In the preparation of this work, the annotator, Swami Vishwarupananda, had the rare privilege of the valuable help and guidance of two of the foremost scholars of the day, viz. late Swami Chidghanananda (Rajendra Nath Ghosh) and Ananda Jha. We fervently hope that this valuable work will be widely appreciated by the Bengali-knowing public interested in the study of Vedanta.

A. K. BANERJEA



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE, NEW YORK

#### UNVEILING OF A BUST OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

An alabaster bust of Sri Ramakrishna, executed by the great American sculptor Miss Malvina Hoffman and presented by her to the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, was unveiled on the evening of the 10th January 1952, by Swami Satprakashananda, Leader of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A., in a ceremony in the Centre's chapel. An unusually large number of friends and devotees attended the function. The list of distinguished guest speakers who addressed the gathering included, among others, Swami Satprakashananda, Duke Armand of Richelieu, Mr. Arthur S. Lall, Consul-General of India in New York, Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-El, New York, Dr. John Howland Lathrop, Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, Swami Pavitrananda, Leader of the Vedanta Society of New York, Mr. Thomas Sugrue, well-known author and lecturer, and Mr. Joseph Campbell, Professor in Sarah Lawrence College and an authority on Indian culture.

The meeting began with a musical programme of Western classical piano compositions and of Indian devotional songs. Mr. Edwin T. Goodridge, President of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, welcomed the speakers and the congregation. Messages were read from, among others, Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Indian Republic, and Dr. William Ernest Hocking, Alford Professor Emeritus, Harvard University. In the course of his Message, Srimat Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj observed:

'The dedication of Sri Ramakrishna's statue in New York City forges yet another spiritual link between India and the U.S.A., and stirs up edifying memories of the past, when Sri Ramakrishna, in a vision, found himself talking to white-skinned devotees in a far-off land, whose language he did not understand'.

In the Message kindly sent by him, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said:

'Paramahansa Ramakrishna has played a great part in modern Indian history not only as a great religious and spiritual leader but also by inspiring numberless persons including Swami Vivekananda and leading him to the new and noble realization

of the beauty of the teachings of our great saints and sages'.

Swami Nikhilananda then gave the introductory address. Speaking of the life and significance of Sri Ramakrishna and pointing out that the haunting sense of God's presence in the Master's words provides the common ground on which the future temple of humanity will be built, he said:

'The aberrations of the modern world, Sri Ramakrishna emphasized, consist of greed and sensuality, the twin pillars of the materialistic life. Physical science and technology, with their accent on multiplicity, have brought into prominent relief a Godless, soulless, and loveless view of man and the universe. War and the fear of war are the direct result of secularism. Thoughtful people everywhere are apprehensive of a doom that is drawing to itself a helpless humanity with the inexorable precision of staggered traffic-lights. "How can a benign God permit such a dire ending for men, whom He created after His own image?"—asks the believer. Or is it a blind fate, inherent in the very nature of things, over which men have no control? Call it fate or an inscrutable cosmic force, it is not outside human control. The accumulated actions and thoughts of men in the past have released this power, against which the individual seems to be impotent. Again, the combined actions and thoughts of men will create a benign power which will be their guardian angel to help them in the realization of their highest, divine potentialities'.

Next Swami Satprakashananda unveiled the bust. All were astonished by the spiritual quality of the work, which caught in a remarkable degree the ineffable charm of the Master. Miss Hoffman, who had met and intimately known Swami Vivekananda when he was in America over fifty years ago, had already (in 1950) presented the Centre with a bronze portrait statue of the great Swami, executed by her. In the course of his illuminating address, Swami Satprakashananda dwelt on the fact that images (whether paintings or pieces of sculpture) are of inestimable value for the development of spiritual life, and that among religious symbols, likenesses of God-men are of special significance. He also presented in brief the cardinal points of Sri Ramakrishna's universal message, and said:

'The reality of God, the realization of God, the harmony of religions, and the service of God in man are the four cardinal points of his message. It centres on the teaching that the supreme object of human life is the realization of God. Man should



live with this end in view. Nothing else can be an end in itself. It is the goal not only of his religious but also of his worldly activities. All the life values—material, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral—must subserve the spiritual ideal. The social, political, and economic systems should be built so as to facilitate the spiritual growth of man. Thus there will be harmony in all the aspects and activities of life. The ultimate goal is one but the ways are many according to the individuals' psychophysical conditions. All men and women, at whatever levels of life they may be, can reach the Goal through progressive courses. Even from the bottom of the lowest pit a man can direct his steps towards the mountain-top. Let one and all live in this world as pilgrims to the shrine of Truth. This is the secret of world unity, peace, and progress. The supreme ideal is indispensable to both spiritual and material growth of man. Whenever worldly greatness and glory become the primary objectives of life, man's morals and intellect degenerate, being subordinate to them. How can there be peace and progress in such a case? So Sri Ramakrishna's message is the key to man's spiritual and material development individually and collectively'.

Duke Armand of Richelieu, who had known Swami Vivekananda intimately, observed that whereas America had stood for the physical independence of man, India had stood for his spiritual independence; and he added that while man's physical independence had led, ironically enough, to wars and exploitation, his spiritual independence had bred, in recent times, the greatest transformation of man in the last three centuries.

Mr. Arthur S. Lall paid high tribute to Sri Ramakrishna, saying that in his opinion the Master's fearless practice of religions other than Hinduism was directly related to those other forces working in India towards her national independence. Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson spoke on the blessing of God and indicated that true wisdom, strength, riches, and honour for which all men sought were to be found in spiritual values. Dr. John Howland Lathrop, a prominent Unitarian Minister, spoke of the invaluable contribution that two ideals very near to Sri Ramakrishna's heart could make to American life. These, he said, were the concept of God as Mother and the principle of inner spiritual discipline.

Swami Pavitrananda, in his forceful address, emphasized the fact that God is something to be realized here and now, in the midst of our daily activities, as amply demonstrated in Sri Ramakrishna's life. The Swami said:

'Sri Ramakrishna revived the old truth that when a prophet is born, when a saint is reborn, he simply renews the old truth that was in exist-

ence but which people forgot; but Sri Ramakrishna contributed something new to the history of the world's religions. It was this that all religions are true. Sometimes we say that all religions are true simply from an idea of liberalism, just the catholic idea that all religions are true; from some intellectual conception or intellectual liberalism we say that my religion and your religion are true. But it was unique in the history of the religions of the world that from direct experience he said that Hinduism is as much true as Christianity is true; Islam is as much true as Christianity is true. This is a true experience in the history of the world from his personal experience. The burden of his message was: Know you first God, realize God in you life. That is the aim of human life, that is the goal towards which humanity is moving. He would be saying that you may have wealth and you may have prosperity; you may have name, you may have fame; you may have wealth, you may have beauty; but nothing avails if you do not devote your mind to God; if you do not realize God in your inward life nothing availeth, everything withers away, everything fades away'.

Mr. Thomas Sugrue, the well-known author of many popular books, spoke reverently and appreciatively of Sri Ramakrishna as one who showed that the way to God is open to anyone. Pointing out that East and West could only achieve fulfilment in sharing their best with one another he said:

'Ramakrishna said the way to God is open to anyone. We have said in our way of life that the way to God is open easiest to him who enters the heart of his neighbour. The East is our neighbour, we can enter its heart and give it what we have to give, but we also have a heart and we should let the East come into it with what it has to give. If we do this, we may find that East and West, hand in hand, are going towards heaven and towards God, and since no man enters the Kingdom of Heaven except by leaning on the arm of someone he has helped, very possibly neither East nor West will enter Heaven except leaning upon one another'.

Mr. Joseph Campbell, after quoting extensively from the Master's inimitable sayings, explained, in a scholarly and penetrating analysis, how Indian religious thought could help the Western mind to free itself from the rigidity and exclusiveness of its religious outlook.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, LONDON  
REPORT FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 1948—  
DECEMBER 1951

The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre was started in London in November 1948, in pursuance of a



resolution unanimously passed at a meeting of devotees and friends at St. Ermin's Hotel, at which it was decided to take steps to establish a Vedanta Centre in England, which would be entirely free from politics in any form, and which would work on the same lines as other Vedanta Centres which are affiliated to the Ramakrishna Order. The Centre is the only one working in Great Britain, and is at present located at 63 Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London, S.W. 7.

**Lectures, Classes, and Meditation:** Since November 1948, Swami Ghanananda, the Minister and President of the Centre, has been giving weekly religious lectures, which are preceded by short prayers, and holding weekly meditation and study classes. After meditation he expounds such texts as the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, or one of the Upanishads. Up to the end of December 1951, 345 lectures were given and classes held.

**Interviews:** The Swami gave interviews to several hundred visitors, and spiritual instructions to earnest seekers. These interviews and instructions helped those who sought them in living more integrated lives.

**Shrine:** An adequate beginning of Shrine has been made with a relic of Sri Ramakrishna, presented to the Swami by Lord Sandwich, as well as a large life-size photograph of Sri Ramakrishna.

**Birthday Anniversaries:** The Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated. Meetings, held to popularize the lessons to be learnt from their lives, were addressed by distinguished speakers like Mr. Kenneth Walker and Sir John Stewart-Wallace, besides the Swami. These meetings have always been popular. Christmas Eve, Easter, Buddha Day, and Navaratri were observed.

**Provincial Work:** The Swami addressed, on invitation, the conference of the Students' Christian Movement at Ashford, Kent; the Oxford University Group for the Study of Religions; the Cambridge University Tagore Institute; Rugby School; and the World Congress of Faiths. He also addressed, by invitation, meetings at Southsea, Bournemouth, Bradford, Nottingham, Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Bingley on Vedanta, Indian psychology, mysticism, and allied subjects. The lectures were highly appreciated.

**Radio Talks:** The Swami gave a few radio talks.

**Publications:** The Centre published a booklet entitled *The Harmony of Religions—A Teaching of Ramakrishna, the Mystic and Teacher of India*.

The Centre issues a bi-monthly called *Vedanta for East and West*. It contains gleanings from the teachings of Vedanta, summaries of some of the more important lectures delivered, extracts from religious and philosophical journals with

comments, and other interesting and instructive matter.

**Needs:** The Centre is in need of buildings and premises which would provide sufficient accommodation for: (i) a temple with a meditation hall; (ii) an auditorium which can seat 300 persons; (iii) a reading-room, a library, and a waiting-room; (iv) the Swami and his monastic assistants; (v) the office; (vi) a kitchen and dining-rooms; and (vii) a garden for cultivating flowers and vegetables.

### RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALA TAL

#### REPORT FOR 1950

Nestled in the interior of the Himalayas, in sylvan surroundings, about eleven miles from Tanakpur, the Sevashrama has been doing useful service for the last thirty-six years. The Sevashrama, with its 12 beds, has been a very useful source of medical relief to the hill-people over a range of thirty miles. The hospital being located near the trade-route between Tibet and the plains, many traders and travellers falling ill in the jungles *en route* and at Tanakpur come here for treatment. Sometimes the present accommodation for 12 indoor patients proves very inadequate and arrangements have to be made for extra beds on the floor causing much inconvenience to the patients. A distinctive feature of the Sevashrama is the treatment given to domestic animals in its Veterinary Department.

The total number of cases treated in the indoor department was 137 and in the outdoor 7,303 of which 5,392 were new cases. Of the 5,529 patients treated, 3,774 belonged to Almora, 915 to Nainital, 383 to Garhwal, 137 to Nepal, and 320 to other places. About 40 different kinds of diseases were treated and 68 minor operations were performed.

In the Veterinary Department, 11 animals were treated in the indoor section, and 1,195 in the outdoor section of which 1,080 were new cases.

**Needs:** It is imperative that at least four more beds for indoor patients and an up to date Operation Theatre are added to the hospital. Besides this the Sevashrama needs:

Permanent Fund for the maintenance

of the hospital	...	Rs. 1,00,000
Building Fund	...	30,000
Equipment and Appliances Fund	...	25,000
Endowment for 4 additional beds	...	12,000

The Veterinary Department also needs a Permanent Fund, for its proper upkeep, to the tune of Rs. 50,000.

Beds may be endowed in memory of near and dear ones. The cost of endowing a bed is Rs. 3,000.

All contributions will be received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal, P.O. Sukhidhang, Dt. Almora, U.P.



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE DIVINE MESSENGER

BY STARSON GOSSE

How easily couldst thou pick up a strain  
From the effulgent light of the Inner Main;  
And givest it endearingly to the Universe  
Like a Poet who gives a lovely verse!

How softly linkest thou the Centre with shore,  
Different radius finds its golden lore;  
All attempts stream differently to the Main  
Till are tuned up in the Harmonious strain!

Divine Minstrel of the sublime ditty,  
At thine touch, Beauty sings of Reality.  
Elevated Realm opens its golden gate,  
The worldly matters in His Being sublimite.

Thy music brings the message of Higher Bliss,  
Plucking golden tinges from yonder Synthesis;  
In that Harmony thine strain profound  
Becomes One with the Tune and the sound.

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# HUMAN EFFORT AND DIVINE WILL

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

What the Lord wills is fulfilled ; it is invariably so. He is all good and does everything for good alone. We do not realize this by reason of our selfishness. Otherwise there is no other motive whatever in His action ; it is always inspired by good motives alone.

'I am His'—if this feeling can be made unwavering, life becomes successful indeed. After that, whatever may be the state in which He may keep one, nothing will matter. After this awareness comes it will not matter wherever one may be. Then the world will not be able to harm one much. There is nothing more to do than to pass the remaining days of life by humbly submitting to Him and remaining satisfied as He chooses to keep. He is the all in all here and hereafter. Fix the mind on Him and look towards Him alone.

That life which is spent in ease, but which does not make Him the aim, cannot be called a good life. He who looks to Him even though he works hard is really blessed.

*Santoṣam paramāsthāya sukhārthi sam-  
yato bhavet,  
Santoṣah sukhamūlam hi duḥkhamūlam  
viparyayah.*

'Seekers after happiness should cultivate perfect contentment and be restrained. For, contentment is the root of happiness and its contrary is the root of misery'.

Actions cannot be judged by seeing their results here ; there is no peace in that. Peace can be attained by gaining conviction in the words of the Lord—that He is the ocean of mercy and the saviour of the world. 'Yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāt śāśvatībhyah samābhyah'<sup>1</sup>—'He (the Brahman) has duly allotted to the eternal World-Creators their respective duties'.

*Bhoktāram yajñatapasām sarvaloka-  
maheśvaram,  
Suhṛdam sarvabhūtānām jñātvā mām  
śāntimṛcchati.*<sup>2</sup>

'Knowing me to be the enjoyer of *yajña* and *tapasyā*, the Great Lord of all the worlds, and the friend of all beings, one finds peace'.

Peace can be had only in the knowledge that He is the benefactor of all beings and is preserving all justly.

What the Lord wills will happen. Everything came by His will; if it all goes, it will go also by His will. There is no use thinking in any other manner than this. 'Let Thy will be done'—firmly thinking thus we have been able to banish all worries. There is no other way to be free from worries. Divine peace fills the heart as the attitude that everything is happening according to His will becomes predominant. In fact everything is under His will. It all happens as He wills—whether we realize it or not. This alone is the invariable truth. Peace will reign in the heart if this can be realized through His grace. If not, then either loss or gain, either joy or sorrow will continue to agitate the mind. One can be really happy if one can actually depend on Him. But it is by no means possible to attain that state without His grace. There is no doubt that His grace can be had if one can make Him the only refuge and stay. He listens to one's prayer if it is done sincerely from the heart. If one can dedicate one's all—wife, children, and wealth, and one's own self even—at His feet, life becomes blessed. Complete self-surrender to the Lord is the final good and ultimate goal of human life.

<sup>1</sup> *Īśa Upaniṣad*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Gita*, V. 29.



*Yeṣām tvantagatam pāpam janānām  
 punyakarmanām,  
 Te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante  
 mām dṛḍhavrataḥ.*<sup>3</sup>

‘Those virtuous persons whose demerit has been exhausted worship me with firm resolve, being free from all dualities and delusion’.

Disease, sorrow, etc. are inevitable in this embodied existence; but he, who, in spite of all these, can contemplate God with firm resolve, being free from dualities and delusion, is alone the one whose demerits have

<sup>3</sup> *Gita*, VII. 28.

been exhausted, that is to say, he will never more be subject to dualities and delusion. This is what the Lord is indicating in the above verse.

It is necessary to hold on to Him, looking to Him alone. If it is so, He Himself will get things done. He is all good—this faith brings peace and happiness. To try to understand the ways of the world with the help of ordinary reason creates only confusion. That is why the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) used to counsel to know God first and then the world. Hold on to the Lord and you will be heir to all good.

## IMPORTANCE OF LIVING

BY THE EDITOR

‘Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great, so strong, that there may be nothing else left in the mind; no place for anything, no time for anything else’.

—Swami Vivekananda

Life on our planet, as it is commonly known and understood, ever brings into bold relief the mystery of death, and more so, the great riddle of the importance of living itself. Death as the end of life has always remained an unwelcome terror to everyone except perhaps the utter cynic, while life is very dear to all. Man, though he knows not how exactly he happened to come and live on earth, loves life immensely and seeks its fulfilment in freedom and happiness. The deepest yearnings of the human heart can find their consummation only in a good, true, and beautiful life lived in peace and contentment. Hence the poet sang, ‘Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal’. And the great statesman of old, Maecenas, is said to have prayed: ‘Make me a cripple in hand, foot, and back; make me a hunch-back and toothless; while life is in me, I am well. Keep

me alive even on the cross’. Life, successfully lived, holds forth immense and varied possibilities for the development of man. It has been rightly said that it is harder to live a consistent life than die a brave death. Life is full of encouragement and opportunity to those who are daring enough to attempt what they never thought possible. A reverence for life and human personality can spring only from an abiding faith in the importance that attaches to the non-material values that constitute the highest ideal of human perfection. Everyone who believes that he has something to give to others and thereby much more to achieve for himself in the way of mutual benefit and all-round progress succeeds in reaping a rich harvest out of the vast and varied opportunities that life offers.

There is nothing peculiarly novel in the suggestion that the history of the origin and



nature of man is not unambiguous. Amidst the maze of theories propounded by theologians, metaphysicians, scientists, and psychologists, one finds it not a little difficult to arrive at a reasonably established conclusion. According to popular definition, to be alive is to eat, drink, beget, and be merry, to gather unto oneself and enjoy all the pleasures of life *ad libitum*. To those who subscribe to this mundane and hedonistic idea of progress, the most important thing in life is not the spiritual development of man but the expansion of man's needs and comforts and the discovery of ever-widening means for obtaining them in full measure. They lay emphasis on the materialistic conception of life and seek to establish an earthly paradise through social development of communities on the basis of science and technique. The ostensible ground for making society the ultimate end by sacrificing the individual before this civic idol, is the passionate concern for the lot of the common man and the urge to make the world a far better place to live in. There are not a few everywhere present who sincerely hope that there will come a time when this world will become perfect and life will be full of happiness only, to the exclusion of all misery and suffering in any form. And because death is inevitable, they conceive of a heaven to which the departed souls will migrate in order to enjoy a hundredfold more intensely the very pleasures they indulged in on earth. Not unoften men seriously doubt whether life has any other higher purpose than the gratification of the senses and the accumulation of wealth and power. At best they think the goal of human existence is betterment of living conditions for all, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour, through social, economic, and political methods.

There can scarcely be a direct answer to the question: What is the most important thing in life? If happiness and progress are the most important things in life, the question immediately arises: What makes people happy and what is the criterion of progress? The answer to this, again, would be that each

individual or group would have to find out and decide upon it for himself or itself. This can lead us nowhere. Man constantly runs after pleasure, undeterred by repeated failures in his attempt to obtain it. His desires have grown immeasurable and become insatiable too. This struggle for more and better life is not the simple striving for mere survival as in the case of a lowly animal. The dynamic and creative urge that expresses itself in and through man's being is not the involuntary reaction of a muscle or nerve to external stimuli. For man is not a passive tool in the hands of or a machine under the control of physical forces. Man is a spiritual being and the importance of living lies in interpreting the world in the light of his highest nature and in conquering the material aspects of life so as to subordinate them to the rule of the Spirit. The innate urge for eternal freedom and bliss finds a limited scope for manifestation in the heroic strivings and struggles of life. The importance of this divine purpose and activity in human life cannot be minimized without undermining the perennial source of what constitutes real progress and prosperity.

The doings of men who could not divest themselves of selfishness, ignorance, and intolerance have tarnished the pages of history. Much that accounts for world peace and social and political stability depends largely on the motivating force behind men's activities. By studying man's physical make-up, as the Behaviourists do, it has not been possible to convince men of the importance of living. A dull, drab, mechanistic view of life and mind does not suffice in affording inspiration and initiative for progress and purposive activity. Man is not born simply to live an animal life. Unlike the animal that is guided by its lower instincts and urges, man possesses higher instincts, power of discrimination, and the will consciously to seek order, unity, and freedom by overcoming chaos, diversity, and limitation. Man, though under the sway of the turbulent senses, is so constituted that he cannot remain satisfied for



long with the satisfaction of his physical needs alone. The demands of the soul, of the inner man, for fuller expansion become more and more insistent and urgent as the appetites and desires of the body and mind are appeased. The pursuit of the spiritual ideal becomes an inevitable necessity to one who has, through self-control and self-discipline, risen above the bonds and delights of the flesh. 'He who loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in the world shall keep it unto life eternal'. To every person who is serious about the purpose and goal of life, the importance lies not in simply living but in the *how* of living. To those who are strong and opulent, it does not take long to understand that to remain healthy and wealthy and to enjoy physical pleasures is not the be-all and end-all of life. Except to the incorrigible libertine, the conviction that man must return from mammon to the Spirit will not be long in coming.

It needs no world teacher or prophet to declare that the joy of living springs from perfect unselfishness, renunciation, contentment, love, and service. Everyone who has experienced it knows this fact well, and any one who has not can test it for himself. When life is cleansed of all dross of corruption with the help of positive righteous ideals—ideals not passively professed but actively practised—, man attains to a state of undiminished non-material life-affirmation, established in which he is in a position to meet and overcome aggressive evil with aggressive good. But on the other hand, by clinging to the lower ideals and values that cater to transient sense-bound vanities, man suffers not a little from tensions and distresses which deprive him of the key to inner poise and peace. Life without balance, without harmony between ideals and environments, cannot but disintegrate, even as a cone put on its vertex topples over in a moment. When one has subdued, nay, eliminated, his lower, finite self in order to establish the glory and power of the Supreme Self, one becomes master of oneself and enjoys life at its best. To such a one

belongs eternal peace and bliss and to none else.

Everything that lies in time and space is bound to pass away. The so-called pleasure which a person believes himself to have derived from his strivings turns out, on closer analysis, to be pain in another form. To believe in the millennium and strive to make the whole world perfect so that there will be no more disease, suffering, wickedness, or even death is far from what any wise man, with a sense of reality, would do. It is no doubt a great and good motive power to make society or the community our ideal and work unceasingly for the advancement of the same. But in practice it is patent even to one with the minimum intelligence that a perfect society or community is impracticable of achievement. For, where there is good, there is evil too, the two coexisting everywhere at all times. Life itself is a continuous struggle between man and everything outside of him. Life is nowhere a simple, smooth-sailing affair, nor can it be wholly good or perfect. When the struggle that so prominently characterizes life ceases, life as it is commonly understood also ends. When this life of struggles and strivings ends, there dawns ideal happiness which man discovers was within him all the time, though he was unaware of it. He also understands that he was foolishly pursuing the objects of sense-pleasure, year after year, and that true happiness and peace are derived from within, not from without, from eternal and entire self-abnegation. Hence have the scriptures and the seers of every land proclaimed in indisputable words that the supreme objective of human life is to realize the true and essential nature of all existence, including that of man.

Man is active by his very nature. All activity presupposes some need, some irresistible want. Whenever man wants happiness he exerts himself in order to achieve it. It is not unusual for a person, with worldly ambitions, to strive to seek wealth, power, and fame. This self-regarding tendency, accu-



mulating everything from everywhere for the comfort and enjoyment of oneself is often denoted by the expression '*pravṛtti-mārga*'. The majority of persons belong to this class and they lay stress on the importance of individual and group interests and the subjection of the former to the latter where necessary. When they are told that man's essential nature is the absolute Spirit and that the world of matter cannot be the ultimate goal of life, they are naturally reluctant to concede that the undifferentiated state of the Spirit is a higher and more enduring state than the differentiated state which is represented by the world. Some go even so far as to think that the absolute Impersonal Spirit is dull and insensate, bereft of any life or activity. The inordinate clinging to life and the body, seen manifested in every living being, and the certainty of death universally perceptible indicate that life does not really depend on matter and that though it somehow became closely linked up with matter, it could never be identical with or be the product of matter. But the cloud of superficialities of day to day life, sponsored by a sensate civilization, hides the sun of true knowledge whereby the unenlightened remain oblivious of the deeper layers of existence. They cling to the body, the mind, and the senses ever more tenaciously and fondly hope they will live for ever. To the question, 'What is the (great) wonder (in the world)?', Yudhishtira, the saintly hero of the *Mahābhārata*, replied centuries ago, saying, 'Every day, (and day after day), beings (animals and human beings) are (passing out of life and) going to the abode of Death; but those living desire eternal life. What can be more wonderful than this?'

The spiritual ideal of life alone can satisfactorily explain the mystery of death. It also lays the surest emphasis on the true importance of living, viz. that life lived at its highest and best ('*nivṛtti-mārgā*') leads to the manifestation of the perfection and divinity already in man. Without spiritual idealism it is well nigh impossible to effect a successful transmutation of men's minds and hearts.

The scientists of today fully endorse the view that life is not all that it appears to be on the surface and that the universe shows ample evidence of a designing and controlling power that has something in common with our own inner springs of thought. Writes Dr. Haldane: 'The conclusion forced upon me in the course of a life devoted to natural science is that the universe as it is assumed to be in physical science is only an idealized world, while the real universe is the spiritual universe in which spiritual values count for everything'. Ambition for outer achievements and worldly success are but natural. But these should be tempered and regulated by the yearning for the inner life. In a life devoted to self-improvement, importance has to be laid on contemplation and inner vision, while the desire for action and achievement should also find its suitable place. It need not be doubted whether spiritual culture and material achievements are contradictory. Definitely they are not, provided the method and organization of the material achievement sought after are not along the lines of the exploitation of man but along the lines of his progressive development.

Whatever the theoretical strength in the argument, 'From each according to his powers, to each according to his needs', it is idle to expect that all people will have equal share of wealth and enjoyment in life. Any artificial attempt at equalizing by violently breaking down disparity is bound to create further complications of a different variety. For, those who have greater power and ability will steal a march over those who have less. But the Vedantic view of life, which demands of us the assiduous cultivation of love, charity, mutual respect, and good neighbourliness has no need for such artificial or violent methods. Herein comes the fundamental difference between the path of religion and that of its opposite. The former insists on mutual reconciliation, healthy reconstruction, amelioration through silent but steady effort. The latter incites class war and seeks remedy through revolution and violent de-



struction of the existing order, and by frittering away valuable energy in conducting activities prompted by hatred and ill will. The spiritual inadequacy of present-day secular ideologies is denuding life of its most essential part, viz. the importance of living. The soul and dynamic principle of civilization lies embedded in the invisible forces of the Spirit of man. To set store by the static, non-essential parts of civilization, being lured by the bread-and-butter outlook on life, is a negation of life's most treasured verities. The development of human dignity and personality through spiritual awareness and intuitive realization of the divinity that fills and animates all life is the ideal. To achieve this man needs proper equipment and practical training in the school of day to day life. Political, economic, and even ethical systems must be subordinated to that supreme spiritual goal. Mere ethics alone—secular, humanistic, or in any other guise, will not suffice, as it constitutes no ultimate end in itself.

Therefore, man should live with this end in view. He has to recognize and reiterate first things first, and encompass within the broad sweep of his informed imagination and enlightened consciousness all life values—material, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral—and blend them into a harmonious symphony in order to subserve the spiritual ideal which should doubtless form the *leit-motiv* of his life. The social, political, and economic systems should be built so as to facilitate the spiritual growth of man. It need hardly be restated that these secular systems at their best help or at their worst hinder the progress of man's all-round development not excluding his spiritual personality. Hence the importance of these systems so as to create for the individual the best possible environment congenial to the full manifestation of the Godhead in and through life itself. The Vedantic conception of life unmistakably calls upon man not to live for himself but to live for others, to expend his resources as a noble sacrifice in the unselfish service of others. It

cuts at the root of all forms of privilege associated with one's caste, creed, race, or profession. The true spirit of religion engenders a solid faith in the innate goodness and greatness of man, irrespective of his external physical or intellectual adjuncts. By understanding and realizing the true importance of living, a person rises spontaneously to newer and wider levels of consciousness and achieves progression in depth as well as in extension. In his love for the afflicted and the downtrodden and in his solicitude for the amelioration of their deplorable condition such a person will be second to none.

Man's place in the universe is none too enviable. He is ever tempted to live exclusively for himself and to shift the importance from god-centredness to self-centredness. Moreover he finds that the imperious claims of the flesh have to be met with to a large extent before he can transcend their limitations. He is constantly in a state of doubt whether to face life as an affair of the moment, even as the lower animals do, or to face it as an eternal and sacred trust vested in him for judicious management. All the same, man has to discover his spiritual link with the entire human family and come to possess that spiritual world view indispensable for a harmonious and effective life. This is the secret of world unity, peace, and progress. However, let there be no mistaking about it whenever we refer to worldly achievements as assuming primary importance in life and consequently leading to moral and spiritual atrophy, it could not even remotely be understood or interpreted as advocacy of total asceticism or world negation. It would be wrong for any right-thinking person to urge complete renunciation of worldly pursuits in general, knowing as everyone does that Vedanta does not teach that the world is unreal or false. It says that the supreme ideal is indispensable not only for the spiritual growth of man but also for his material advancement on right lines.

The test of all true religion is what we



make of our life here and now; and the test of life, well and truly lived, is what we can do to express religion in practice, by creating greater harmony and understanding among men and nations. The lover of God has to extend his horizon of divine communion and include every being that perforce lives, moves, and has its being in God. Such a man does not and should not become a cross-grained recluse or a world-weary cynic. He lives freely a normal life and apparently enjoys everything that helps him and others onward

in the path of perfection. Yet, from the higher spiritual level where he ever strives to remain, he does not live a worldly life, nor does he enjoy worldly pleasures. He enjoys the highest freedom from worldly enjoyment, while outwardly living the life of an ordinary man. To him the importance of living lies not in this life of the senses but in something more than that, in the Life Eternal beyond. And this struggle towards the great ideal, towards supreme perfection, is the most important component of what we call Life.

## THE POWER OF SILENCE

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

*(Continued from the March issue)*

Real spirituality is judged from a man's understanding, from his wisdom, from his self-control, from the inward peace he feels in the midst of his difficulties. That is the real test. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'Go forward. Go deep into the forest. Do not stop with one or two experiences'. One may see some light or feel some awakening or hear some sound. Such things happen for many reasons. But one should not stop there. A poor wood-cutter met a holy man who told him to go deeper into the forest and he would find sandalwood trees. So the wood-cutter went into the forest. And after he had brought home the sandalwood he thought, 'Tomorrow let me go still deeper into the forest'. The next day he came upon a silver mine. That night he thought, 'The holy man did not tell me to stop there'. So the following day he went still deeper into the forest and came upon a gold mine; and in that manner he went deeper and deeper and at last found a diamond mine and became immeasurably wealthy.

The deeper the spiritual experience is, the

quieter the mind becomes. It is said in the Upanishad that a father sent his son to the teacher's house to learn the Truth. According to the custom in ancient India, the boy went and spent five years with the teacher and then returned home very proud of his learning. The father asked him, 'My son, have you learnt the Truth?' 'Yes, I have learnt the Truth', the boy said and then proceeded to give an eloquent talk on the nature of Brahman. The father said, 'No, you have not learnt the Truth. Go back and spend another five years'. After another five years, when he again returned home the boy was humble; his eyes were fixed on the ground. When he approached his father, the father said, 'My boy, no need is there for you to say anything this time. Yes, you have known the Truth'.

Great powers are released in silence. These are the three manifestations of power released by silence: the destructive, the creative, and the healing. The destructive power is manifested by the tiger. Before it springs upon its victim it stands poised in absolute quiet.



Or a cat before it pounces on a mouse sits perfectly still. There is silence before a storm; there is silence in the heart of a tornado. There is silence in the hearts of robbers and murderers before they act; before executing their diabolical plans they are silent, and in that silence they acquire the intensity they need to commit their acts.

Then there is creative silence. We all know that when we sow a seed it germinates in the earth in silence. After the seed is sown, if you dig around that place the seed does not grow. We see the growth of an oak from a tiny acorn and we know of the growth of the pearl in the oyster. These take place in silence. The artist creates in silence. All creative work is preceded by silence. In the life of Michelangelo we see that before he would execute one of his masterpieces, he would not see any one for days. He would go into solitude and there in silence he would conceive the idea, and then like a madman he would rush into the studio and seize his tools and start to chisel the marble.

No saint has ever been created in a marketplace, though he may give his message there. Christ spent eighteen years leading a life of contemplation before he delivered the Sermon on the Mount. And even during his ministration he would go away from human contact into solitude and pray to his Father in Heaven, and in that silence he would recharge his battery, as it were. Buddha was away, living in silence, for a number of years before he started his work.

A spiritual seeker should cultivate a positive distaste for the company of men during the years of his spiritual practice. In every church there is the word 'silence', explicit or implied, and if the congregation is quiet before the service it creates the mood to understand what is later said from the pulpit; and afterwards, if the congregation remains quiet, it can assimilate the teachings that have been given.

Now we come to the healing power of silence. The healing power of silence is great. Both for physical sickness and for

soul sickness silence is a great medicine. In hospitals and in sick-rooms a notice for silence is given. Noise irritates the nerves and retards convalescence. The recuperating power is within man himself. If that power were destroyed all the medicines of the world could not heal a man. Silence soothes the nerves and helps to heal the man. If this is true of a physical malady it is all the more true of sickness of the mind, and today doctors tell us that many of our physical maladies are directly related to the sickness of the mind. It is no secret that thousands of people commit suicide every year, and among the names printed are those of many prominent people such as politicians, statesmen, actors, and writers.

It is very important for statesmen and politicians to practise silence. One really is depressed to see how things are being done in the United Nations meetings. The wounds of the nations are very deep. The most vital problems of human civilization are discussed there—and what happens? The great nations compete with one another in indulging in anger, and the delegates simply walk out of the meetings. That is not the way to bind up the wounds of humanity. Before each session there should be some time devoted to prayer and silence, to contemplate the solidarity of mankind.\* If they would commune long enough in silence, it would be revealed to them that men everywhere are good, that men everywhere want peace, and that there is more similarity between man and man, irrespective of race and creed, than is possible for the politicians to believe. They act as they do because they have no inwardness of mind.

The mind of man is really sick, and that sickness manifests itself through three things: discontent, worry, and neurosis.

A man possesses plenty; there is no particular reason for his being discontented. Still he is not contented. It is an inner disturbance. It has nothing to do with the outside world. Once a doctor was visiting a farmer friend of his and as he passed the



wheat fields he remarked how healthy the wheat was. He said to the farmer, 'you have wonderful wheat this year'. The farmer answered that probably within the next few months it would be damaged by the wind; because the wind usually came and damaged it. But a few months later, when the doctor again came and met the farmer, he said, 'I see you have a wonderful crop of wheat. The wind did it no harm'. And the farmer said, 'Yes, the wind did not come this year, but though the wheat was very good, when you get a good crop, you take something out of the soil. The fields become impoverished'.

Everyone knows what worry is. Most of the things we worry about never happen. It often has nothing to do with ourselves even. Perhaps a man is sitting on his porch till ten o'clock at night, worrying because a neighbour's grown-up daughter had not yet come home. It is said in Sanskrit that between worry and the funeral pyre, worry is the more injurious, because the funeral fire consumes a dead man, but worry consumes a living man.

We worry about things that are absolutely beyond our control. We are worrying about the third world war and about the hydrogen bomb. Instead of worrying, we should keep our heads cool and do what we can to prevent these things from happening. How does a war take place? There is always a scapegoat. When you come to the bottom of it, war is the outcome of man's greed and lust for power. A man like the Kaiser or Hitler would not have behind him a large following of men for the fulfilment of his greed and lust if they themselves were not of the same mind. Nations consist of individuals; and if individuals control their greed and lust there will be no war. It is not worry, it is madness that creates war. In a tennis tournament the best player does not run all over the court. He stands in one place and uses the serene stroke. When the ball comes he watches intently, and as if he had all eternity before him, he deftly gives the effective stroke. The man who runs all over the court, chasing after the ball, does

not succeed in placing the ball in the right place.

Neurosis is wasting man's mental and physical powers. A per specialist to another without avail. The real trouble is that his complaint is not properly diagnosed. There is nothing definite about the trouble. Neurosis is found more among people possessed of plenty, among the idle rich, than among others. The sure cure for this is constructive work. If one really wants happiness one must render unselfish service to others. Happiness comes from unselfish service to others, and peace comes from the contemplation of God.

What is the cause of soul-sickness? Sri Ramakrishna put his finger on the spot and expressed the cause in those two succinct words: lust and greed. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that three things are the doorway to hell: passion, anger, and greed. We are suffering from a disease and have all the objects around us to make it worse. The two worst things for a typhoid patient are water and pickles. In India these are always taken out of a typhoid patient's room. But we are surrounded by pickles and jars of water too. We are surrounded by all the things that stimulate our greed and lust. If one looks at the newspapers, the shop windows, and the radio, and analyses the content of ninety per cent of what one sees and hears, one will find that it comes under the heading of food and sex. That is why the soul of humanity is sick today.

Man is breaking down under the strain of all this noise. Someone said that the twentieth century may be aptly called the 'Age of Noise'. The development of technology is directly responsible. Then add radio and television. Things have come to such a pass that very often when a man goes into a restaurant, before he orders food he starts the music playing in a music-box. On a college campus students are seen trying to solve mathematical problems with a radio going on. In church one finds soft music for better contemplation. They are just destroying man's



nervous system. The nervous system is very delicate. All our fine ideas express themselves through it, and if one has good ideas but not the proper conduit through which to express those ideas, a neurosis develops.

What is the cure for neurosis? The cure lies in changing one's philosophy of life. We must give a new interpretation to life, not the mechanistic interpretation that man now accepts. Man has a spiritual origin; he is sustained by spiritual force and in the end he attains to a spiritual existence. We must have faith in the intangible world. Man is something much greater than he appears to be on the surface. The world is much vaster than what we see through our sense-organs, and we are very intimately related to this vast world. If a man does not extend his horizon beyond the sense-perceived world he creates a fever within himself. No one denies the use of legitimate pleasures, but these pleasures must lead to some sort of spiritual discipline. So the goal of human experience, the end of life, the goal of birth on this earth is the realization of man's highest potentiality, and that is his inner divinity. And this divine potentiality of man manifests itself through his purified sense-organs, mind, and nervous system.

Everybody has heard of the amber beads that are made in Damascus. Native craftsmen take one bead at a time and give it two or three rubs and then put it down for a little while. Then they take it up again and give it two or three more rubs. Friction creates heat. If the native goes on rubbing the bead without allowing it to cool, it cracks under the friction. Man's nature is more delicate than the amber bead. Sri Ramakrishna says that once a week or once a month one should go into solitude. But mere silence will not help. When we are in solitude we should contemplate the eternal verities of life. We should try to commune with God. We should try to think of the insubstantiality of worldly objects. In that way an inwardness of mind will be created in us and gradually there will be revealed to us a much greater world than the world we see through our five senses.

We need the healing power of silence, not the destructive silence. We need the silence in which the mother kisses the sleeping child at night, the silence which hastens the growth of the oak tree from the acorn. We need the silence in which the holy man blesses the world.

*(Concluded)*

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## THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY DR. E. A. PIRES

Every philosopher is also an educationist of sorts, for there can be no philosophy of life that does not carry with it consequential implications for education. Swami Vivekananda was primarily a religious teacher, but as religion, life, and education are inextricably united, he has left behind a wealth of observations on educational problems which constitute a coherent philosophy of education; and

it is my purpose in this paper to consider some of the salient features of this philosophy, specially those aspects of it that have real value for us in these critical days of discord and strife.

First of all, let us consider Vivekananda's views about the aims of education. 'The aim of all education, of all training,' he says, 'should be man-making'. 'It is man-making



religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want'. 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet'. A mere accumulation of information, he asserts, is not the end of education; for such information may remain unassimilated and may run riot in the mind, wreaking great havoc on the individual personality and through it on society. What is required is 'life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas'. 'A nation may conquer the waves, control the elements, develop the utilitarian aspects of life seemingly to the utmost limits, and yet not realize that in the individual the highest type of civilization is found in him who has learned to conquer the self'. Not inert ideas, therefore, but ideas that provide the dynamics for the battle of life are what education should impart. True education means not the taking of some university degree but the training of the will whereby its current and expression are brought under control and made fruitful. An education that brings no good either to the individual or to the country at large is a negative education, and an 'education based on negation is worse than death'. We need an education that quickens, that vivifies, that kindles the urge of spirituality inherent in every mind.

How, then, is such an education to be provided? Swami Vivekananda has emphasized the fact that all education is ultimately self-education, that self-help is nowhere more significant than in education. 'No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things'. 'You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way'. The work of the teacher is to stimulate, to inspire, to guide. The child's personality has

to be respected. His individuality—but not his eccentricity—must be afforded scope and opportunity for proper development; for liberty—which is not to be confused with licence—is the first condition of such development. In every child there are innate tendencies which require adequate scope for satisfaction; but due to undue domination exercised by parents and teachers, children do not get free scope for wholesome growth. Parents and teachers should beware of any undue violence to the child's personality. They should instead give children positive ideas which they can and will make their own, each according to his or her own needs and powers. The function of the teacher is to serve as a guide. 'You can only serve', says Vivekananda to the teacher. 'Serve the children of the Lord if you have the privilege. Do it only as worship'.

According to Vivekananda there is only one method by which to attain knowledge, to achieve success in a task, and to build up character; and that is the method of concentration. 'The very essence of education', he says, 'is concentration of mind'; and the greater the concentration, the greater is the knowledge acquired and the greater is the efficiency of the task performed. High achievements in the various fields of human endeavour including the attainment of sanctity are the result of concentration. The science as well as the power of Yoga, for example, is the fruit of concentration on the internal world, on the unseen realms in the self. But the ability to concentrate is not acquired in a hurry: it comes only through the practice of meditation, through the constant training of the mind to control the undesired impulses and the disturbing thoughts that tend to rush in when we try to concentrate on an idea or on a job. We become what we think. 'Thoughts', says Vivekananda, 'live; they travel far'. Hence the significance of concentration on Truth, on Beauty, and on Goodness for the attainment of a spiritual character and for the acquisition



of 'the tremendous energy and gigantic will power' generated by spirituality.

Swami Vivekananda also emphasizes the psychological fact that we become what we do. Habit, he says, is not second nature, as we are wont to say, but it is first nature—nay, it is the whole nature of man. 'Everything that we are is the result of habit'. This may appear a very depressing doctrine, but it is not. On the contrary, it is a consoling idea, inasmuch as we can both unmake and make habits. The remedy for bad habits is counter habits. Bad habits can all be controlled by good habits. 'Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character'. But as the breaking of habits or the reformation of character is always more difficult than the making of habits or the formation of character, we should concentrate on the building up of good habits of thought, feeling, and action ; for, as Vivekananda says, 'when a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts, there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good. Even if he wishes to do evil, his mind as the sum total of his tendencies will not allow him to do so'. The implication of this for education is that children should be accustomed from the earliest years to think, feel, and act aright ; for evil tendencies acquired in the plastic years tend to shackle our minds and to encompass our impulses to good. 'We are like silk-worms. We make the thread out of our own substance and spin the cocoon, and in course of time are imprisoned inside'.

Character education, therefore, cannot begin too early. But character education, if it is to be effective, must be based on religion which is 'the innermost core of education'. The greatest and the foremost human relationship is the relationship of man with God, the relationship of the creature with his Creator ; and religion is the full and proper realization of this relationship, the perfect union of the human soul with its Maker. Mere doctrines or dogmas do not constitute religion. No scriptures can make us religious, unless we attempt not only to know God but also to love

and serve Him. As Vivekananda says: 'Temples and churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps'—the steps of love and service. In the attainment of these highest objectives the examples of the saints are always a help and an inspiration ; and religious education should inculcate a veneration of 'those great-souled ones who have realized the eternal truths'. It should emphasize their strength of faith, their fearlessness of moral courage, and their intensity of love which enabled them to attain such great heights of spirituality. The inspiration of noble souls is a *sine qua non* of religious development for it moves the heart to emulation of their deeds. And what is religion if it is not 'being and becoming' like the ones who have realized God?—if it is not the awakening of the Spirit within us, consequent upon pure and heroic action'?

This brings us to Vivekananda's conception of the teacher-pupil relationship and his ideal of a teacher, for, according to him, 'without the personal example of the teacher, there would be no education'. The child must have before him a living example of the highest teaching. The true teacher is one who 'knows the spirit of the scriptures', and not one who deals overmuch or only in words, thus losing the spirit. Secondly, the teacher must be pure. Purity of heart and soul is a necessary condition of acquiring truth for one's self or for imparting it to others. Sympathy is another quality that every teacher should possess, for 'without real sympathy we can never teach well'. That teacher is a true teacher who possesses the power to 'convert himself' into his pupils and to think and feel with them ; who can fathom and understand their minds so as to be able, if necessary, to come down to their level. And finally, the teacher must be free from all ulterior or selfish motives. He must be motivated only by love—by love of his pupils and love of mankind at large ; for 'the only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love'. On the part of the pupil, there must



be an implicit faith in the teacher. There must be the same relationship as between an ancestor and his descendant. The pupil must feel truly humble before his teacher, and in his heart there must be a reverential respect for him ; but such veneration need not lead to a blind obedience to or an unthinking love of the teacher. It must be a rational reverence for superior wisdom and purity.

Swami Vivekananda was deeply interested in the problem of the education of Indian women. He believed that respect for women constituted one of the hall-marks of the greatness of a nation; that, as Manu has said, 'where women are respected, there the gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught'. Such respect, however, can only be engendered by an educated womanhood, by women who have learnt 'to solve their own problems in their own way'; and therefore it is necessary to heed the injunction of Manu that 'daughters should be educated with as much care and attention as the sons'. The education of women should centre round religion and should aim primarily at the development of character, with particular emphasis on the ideal of chastity which is the special heritage of Indian womanhood and which should be intensified above everything else. 'The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita', the model of purity, patience, and suffering. Vivekananda strongly advocated a training in renunciation for some Indian women so that they may be able to take up the vow of virginity and devote themselves to the spread of female education and to social work. This is a suggestion that is pregnant with immense possibilities and that requires to be very seriously considered by religious leaders in the country. 'It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born'; and it will be the special work of Brahmachārinīs to preach character and piety and to spread education among the women of India. If the women of India are educated and raised, if their natural virtues are

strengthened and developed, their children will, by their noble lives and heroic deeds, glorify the motherland ; and 'then will culture, knowledge, power, and devotion awaken in the country'.

This should not be understood to mean that Swami Vivekananda saw no need for educating directly the male population of the country. On the contrary, he was a staunch supporter of the earliest possible education of the masses. 'The chief cause of India's ruin', he admitted, 'has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men'. The masses must be educated to develop their lost individuality ; and this, he believed, could be done by bringing the great spiritual truths within the reach of the people. The people were hungry for knowledge, for wholesome, positive ideas, for culture, with the aid of which they could work out their own salvation. Such knowledge and such culture could be effectively given to them only through the vernaculars. It would have to be carried to them to their villages. If the poor villager and his children cannot come to education, education must go to them. Vivekananda believed that the co-operation of the thousands of self-sacrificing Sannyasins, who went about the country from village to village teaching religion, could be fruitfully sought as teachers of secular knowledge as well. In addition to these, he believed that there was need for millions of 'feeling', 'willing', and 'steadfast' workers to volunteer for this urgent and great service. He does not seem to have thought of conscripting teachers, though conscription under certain emergency conditions and in a certain national frame of mind may prove, if and when it is tried, to be quite a successful experiment. Vivekananda, however, appealed to his educated countrymen to pray for inspiration to 'take up this great task. 'Let us pray, "Lead, kindly Light", he said, 'and a Beam will come through the dark, and a Hand will be stretched forth to lead us'.



# SAINT EKANATHA

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Of the saints who followed after Jñāneswara and Nāmadeva to uphold the traditions which they together with other Nātha saints had built up, the most important was Ekanātha, born, probably, in 1533 at Paithāṇa. Both his father, Suryanārāyana, and his mother, Rukminibāi, having passed away when he was a mere infant, he was brought up by his grandparents, who naturally bestowed on him the care and affection which the child would have enjoyed had his parents been living. But, as if conscious of the loss he had sustained, Ekanatha became increasingly grave and aloof with the growing years, taking no interest whatsoever in games and other childlike occupations. Instead he found more joy in reading stories about saints and contemplating the beauty and the astonishing purity of their characters. A favourite place where he would often retire to occupy himself with the thoughts of the saints was a Shiva temple situated outside Paithana.

It is said that when he was barely twelve he heard a voice telling him to proceed to a village called Devagāon where he would meet a saint, Janārdanapant, who would initiate him into the spiritual life. Accordingly, he went to Devagaon and met the said saint, who, after satisfying himself that he fulfilled the conditions of a disciple, agreed to accept him as one. Soon after this and under instructions from his teacher, Ekanatha retired to a lonely place near by where he spent six years in intense and uninterrupted meditation, realizing in the end his spiritual aims. It was at this time that his teacher introduced him to Jñāneswara's two books, *Jñāneśwari* and *Amṛtānubhava*, the two books which exercised a profound influence on his character in the years to come.

Shortly after this Ekanatha's teacher asked him to undertake a tour of the holy places,

adding that when he had completed this, he was to return home and settle down to the normal life of a householder after marriage. It was probably the teacher's intention that Ekanatha should be an ideal householder rather than an ideal monk, for it was in the former role that he was likely to serve the community better than in the latter. However that may be, in strict obedience to his teacher's instructions, Ekanatha returned home after the tour and marrying a girl called Girijābāi began the life of a householder.

As a householder he lived a life which soon began to attract wide-spread notice and rouse conflicting comments in the neighbourhood. While some thought very highly of him, paying him the respect due only to the best and noblest among saints, others thought he was a fool or a cheat. Some came to him expecting to see him perform miracles; others came with the hope that they would find in him a scholar of the first grade. As he did not answer to their expectations, they went away disappointed, abusing him roundly for befooling them. But among his visitors were some who were discerning enough to recognize that under the surface of what appeared commonplace and ordinary in his character there were traits which unmistakably pointed to his greatness. What was most striking about him was that he would treat everybody with utmost courtesy and consideration, irrespective of any treatment that he himself might receive from others. Numerous stories are current illustrating this side of his character. His own son might defy him and insult him, because he thought he was more learned than his father, but Ekanatha would overlook it good-humouredly, never failing to give him the father's love and goodwill. A Mussulman might spit at him just to show how much contempt he felt for him, but un-



ruffled, Ekanatha would acknowledge it as if he had just been offered a kiss of honour. Similarly, thieves might break into his house at dead of night to lift whatever they could lay their hands on, but he would receive them and treat them as if they were guests of honour.

What Ekanatha's life specially demonstrates is that it is possible to live the highest truths of religion even within the framework of a poor householder's life. Toiling and struggling for bare subsistence like everybody else of the common folk among whom he lived and moved, he yet practised those noble principles which many may talk of but are far from realizing. It was in Ekanatha's daily routine that one might find proof of the feasibility of combining happily what is regarded as the mundane and the spiritual. While he went about his daily duties just as well as everybody else, he yet found time to perform his usual devotions, though it was of course his attitude towards life which underlined his greatness rather than anything he did or did not do during the day. He would leave his bed long before dawn when he would sit down to meditate. Afterwards he would go to the river to take a bath and coming back home would spend some time reading the *Gita* and the *Bhāgavata*. Since then till meal-time he would occupy himself with family duties. At meal-time it was his practice to have some guests to share with him whatever modest fare he was able to provide for them. To give an example of what lengths he might go to in order to entertain his guests, reference might be made to the well-known story which records how he used for fuel the only bed he had because all the fuel in the house had been exhausted during a specially long spell of rainy weather, in order to serve cooked food to guests who had demanded it. However, in the afternoon, he would give discourses on the *Jñāneśvarī* or the *Bhāgavata*; in the evening he would meditate again. Afterwards he would sing devotional songs till it was time to go to bed. Thus between work and worship he divided

all his time. Though apparently a devotee and a dualist, Ekanatha was, as far as can be judged from his writings, a strict non-dualist, a Vedantin of Shankara's school. It is remarkable how, without knowing any Sanskrit, and without having many vernacular books to help him in its study, he had mastered the difficult philosophy of Vedanta. The fact deserves special mention that it was through his writings that Vedanta became accessible to the masses. It is probable that he owed his interest in and understanding of Vedanta to his study of the *Jñāneśvarī* and the *Amṛtānubhava*, specially the latter, which was predominantly a treatise on Vedanta, as is well known.

It is said that once Ekanatha was suffering from a throat disease when Jñaneswara, appearing in a dream, told him that he would get well if he removed a root of the *ajāna* tree, which, having got into his tomb at Ālandi, was choking him. As Ekanatha removed the root, he heard a voice purporting to be that of Jñaneswara, dictating to him the text of *Jñāneśvarī*, which had at that time got out of sight. It is, therefore, to Ekanatha that the world owes the only version of the book it knows and has grown to love so much.

Ekanatha himself was a writer of no mean order, having written some Abhangas which mark him out as a poet of the highest merit. But he took no credit for this, for he said it was Jñaneswara who was the real author, while he was only his agent. It was, however, surprising to him that Jñaneswara should have chosen such a 'fool' as he to be his agent.

His respect for his teacher was comparable only to that Jñaneswara had for his. To give an idea how much he loved and adored his teacher he would describe how he would like to worship him. First he would purify his mind completely and then install him on a seat there. By way of incense he would burn his own egoism at his feet, his best emotions would serve as the light to be waved, and all his sense-impressions would be



the food that he would invite him to partake of. He would say that his teacher had done a miracle in that he had kindled in him a light which never knew any diminishing. As a mark of respect for his teacher he coupled his teacher's name with his in each Abhanga that he wrote. Referring to the role that the teacher played in unfolding the latent spiritual qualities in a disciple, he would say that the teacher was indispensable and more important than even God.

Ekanatha thought that he was the most fortunate who could meet a true saint. According to him, it was easy enough to meet persons possessing miraculous powers, such as changing the courses of the planets or walking over water, but to meet a real saint was most difficult. In describing the signs of a saint he said that a saint was a person who was never influenced by the objective conditions of life. He might be struck by an enemy, but he would not like to retaliate. He might lose his only son, or his very dear wife, or whatever earthly possessions he might have, but he would remain cheerful. Equally indifferent to adversity and prosperity, he would never lose control over his mind, never give way to joy or to sorrow.

He did not believe in leaving home and going to the forest in search of God. Ridiculing the idea that God might be found in the forest, he would ask if the forest was not also the home of pigs. He stressed the need of overcoming the attraction for woman and gold, which was the greatest impediment in the path of realizing God. He made no special distinction between Sanskrit and the popular vernacular languages, for, he expressed the view that if God had created Sanskrit, was it Satan who had created the vernaculars? If one prayed to God sincerely

God would be pleased, and it did not matter in what language one prayed.

He would say that devotion made the devotee bigger than even God. In one place he described the devotee as the father of God. To indicate the relations between God and the devotee he would say that while God was impersonal, the devotee was personal; while God was the ocean, the devotee was the waves; while God was gold, the devotee was the ornament made of it; while God was the flower, the devotee was the scent of the flower.

Like Namadeva he laid much stress on the name of God. He would say that while everything else in the world was perishable, the name of God was not. Similarly he would advise everybody to practise meditation. He would say that by intense meditation one could become united with the object of his meditation. To give an example he would refer to the insect which, when under the power of the bee, became itself transformed into a bee as a result of its dread for the bee. If this was possible for an insect, it might be possible for a man also. He would say that the aim of life was God realization and if a man did not bend all his energy to the fulfilment of this aim, he had only lived in vain.

Ekanatha lived a fairly long life, passing away in 1599, at the age of sixty-six. All his life he followed his routine which has already been described, and preached God in the clearest and most convincing way. He lived a life which in itself was the best argument that could be advanced for religion, and it is, therefore, no wonder that, despite all the limitations to which he was subject either by choice or by necessity, he had become one of the most potent forces in popularizing the fundamental principles of religion in medieval India.



# ROLE OF INDIANS IN ANCIENT BURMESE HISTORY

BY DR. DHIRENDRA NATH ROY

(Continued from the March issue)

As early as about the time of the *Mahābhārata* there were in Northern India two royal families, one ruling over the regions called Panchāla and Kosala and the other over Koliya. The king of Koliya had a beautiful daughter whom the king of Panchala offered to marry. But the proposal was disdainfully rejected by the former. So a war ensued which finally resulted in the defeat of the Sākya king of Koliya and the virtual loss of his kingdom. Upon this a certain prince named Abhi Raja of the defeated royal family took with him a small army and proceeded a long way eastward till he passed the kingdom of Manipur and reached a new hilly region. There at Tagaung, not far from modern Bhamo, he found himself well received by the local people and settled down to rule over them. The Burmese Chronicle depicts this kingdom of Abhi Raja as the first Burmese kingdom. Evidently it shows that the earliest Burmese royal family traced its descent from the Sakya dynasty of India. Those who consider themselves as real Burmans also trace their descent from the Indian Sakya clan. It is said that this Tagaung kingdom was established about 900 B.C. or 300 years before the time of the Lord Buddha. A recent Burman historian<sup>1</sup> gives a list of thirty-three kings of the line of Abhi Raja, who ruled at Tagaung for about three hundred years. King Beinaka, the last of the royal line, was overthrown and expelled by the Tarok and Tarit Chinese from Gandalarit or modern Yunnan. About the time of the Buddha there was a fresh stream of immigrants from India under another Sakya prince named Daja Raja. This prince arrived after having got the news

<sup>1</sup> U Po Kya in his *A Brief Modern History of Burma* (in Burmese).

of the overthrow of the Abhi Raja dynasty. He succeeded in re-establishing the lost Hindu kingdom at Tagaung and ruled over it assuming the title of Thado Zambudwipa Daja Raja. He was succeeded by as many as sixteen or seventeen kings of his clan, all bearing the same title Thado of the founder king, ruling altogether for about one hundred years. The last of this royal line was Thado Maharaja. It was the same Yunnanese or Shans, as they were later called, who invaded this kingdom again and this time it meant the end of Tagaung.

Thus the first Burmese kingdom of Tagaung founded and ruled over by the lineage of the North Indian Sakya Vamsha flourished for four hundred years starting from 900 B.C. This kingdom was really not a petty state. It extended from Tagaung on the great river Irrawaddy at its far northern course to as far down as Kyaukpadaung in Arakan. It is said that when Abhi Raja died, his elder son went out to conquer other territories. He marched to the Chindwin Valley and having brought this region under his sway invested his son with the power to rule at Kalé. Thereupon he proceeded further, crossed over Kyaukpadaung and there established himself as the first ruler of Arakan. A great kingdom lasting for four hundred years surely had its glorious achievements. But little has been done so far to bring them to light except a few scraps here and there to give us some faint glimpses of the glory that was Tagaung.

The end of Tagaung, however, was not the end of the ruling Sakya line in Burma. A new kingdom arose soon after at Prome, or more accurately at Thiri Kettara, just a few miles from modern Prome. It was founded



by a descendant of king Thado Maharaja, the last king of Tagaung.

There is a long story about how the twin sons of the expelled king Thado Maharaja were born in the forest where he and his queen had taken refuge to save themselves from the hands of the invading Shans, and how these two young brothers having been sufficiently grown up drifted down the Irrawaddy on a simple bamboo raft till they reached Prome near the mouth of the river. The sea had not receded yet from Prome which was, therefore, still a seaport. There they met their maternal uncle Khepaduta, who had left Tagaung before its fall and come there to lead a hermit life. Through Khepaduta the princes became known to the people who received them well. It so happened that at this time the Burmese people here were very much harassed by the powerful raiders from Arakan. They chose the elder prince Mahathambwa to be their chief and lead them to fight the raiders. The prince accepted the offer and succeeded in defeating and driving away the latter. Thereupon the people were glad to own him as their king with Prome as his capital. But unfortunately he died in course of a few years. As his son Dutta Paung was then very young, his twin brother Sulathambwa became king.

When Dutta Paung succeeded his uncle he removed the royal court to a few miles off eastward and built there the splendid city of Thiri Kettara. The name Thiri Kettara sounds very familiar to all Indians, reminding them of the ancient holy city of Sri Kshetra in the Indian province of Orissa. The famous Chinese pilgrims of old, Hiuen-Tsang and I-Tsing mentioned about this Burmese city in their travel records saying that 'southward from this and close to the sea coast, there is a country called Shi-li Cha-to-lo'. Perhaps the people of this area in those olden days were not Burmans but Indians who were immigrants from the coastal region of Orissa. These immigrants surely loved to give their new colony in Burma the name of their favourite holy place to feel at home here as in their old homeland, just

as one can see in America the strange duplication of the names of European countries and cities, such as New England, New Hampshire, Cambridge, Oxford, Birmingham, Montpellier, and so on. The new popular king Dutta Paung, to please his people, must have chosen to call his capital city Sri Kshetra or in its Pali form Thiri Kettara. According to the Burmese Chronicle this new kingdom was founded in 483 B.C. It was also known as Yathemyo or hermit city in memory of the royal hermit Khepaduta. The Chronicle says that twenty-seven kings ruled over this kingdom for about 578 years. In this line of kings one may find such Indian names as Vikrama and Verman rulers. But they all held the title of Dutta Paung in place of Maharaja perhaps in memory of the founder king. Among them king Thu-mon-dri (Sumantri) was very important in view of the fact that the ancient Burmese era began with him. Fourteen years after the death of this famous king the splendid city of Thiri Kettara was sacked by Arakanese and the Talaings.

The Burmese Chronicle speaks highly of this city. Its gorgeous buildings including three royal palaces were surrounded by a massive wall with several large and small gates. It extended about ten miles in every direction. It is said that there are still 'remains of formidable walls built of massive bricks a foot and a half long, half this in width, and three inches thick, and the traces of embankments and pagodas, walled enclosures, and burial grounds'. Archaeological excavations in the ruined city have unearthed very interesting relics of the famous pagoda *Bawbawgyi*. These included a number of terracotta plaques revealing the influence of Shaivism. 'Further, there is a fairy-tale of a war between Peikthano in the Magwe district and Dutta Paung of Hsare Kettara. The princess of Peikthano had a magic drum, and the Prome king had three eyes. Peikthano is the Burmese transliteration of Vishnu, and Shiva had three eyes. The conclusion is that the hostilities symbolize the struggle



between Shaivism and Vishnuism'. (Sir J. G. Scott: *Burma*, p. 30). From all these accounts it seems clear that not only the rulers of this kingdom were followers of the old Brahmanic faith, but even the people themselves were for the most part of its history predominantly Hindus,—predominantly, I should like to say, because there are also some findings from these excavations which give evidences of the existence, at least in the later stages of this kingdom, of some form of Buddhism. This is understandable because the kingdom came to an end in the first century of the Christian era and Buddhism had already been old enough by two or three centuries in some parts of Burma to have later extended itself in this part as well.

The last of the twenty-seven kings of this kingdom was Thu-pyinya Naga-sena (Supunya Nagasena). When Prome fell his nephew Thamok-darit, accompanied by a good number of loyal people with their families, fled northward. They stopped at several places and in course of twelve or thirteen years finally reached You-hlot-kyun, seven miles east of the Irrawaddy-Chindwin confluence. There they established their own new villages. As originally they called themselves *Pyus* these villages at first took the group name of Pyu-gan and later Pagan. Soon a new kingdom arose here in about 107 A.D. It was a central place in Burma, with abundant facilities for the caravan parties from Nanchao or Yunnan and India to meet here for trade purposes. Traders from distant countries, particularly Indians who came to Pagan frequently through Manipur, exchanged their variety of goods and invariably introduced their own variety of culture to the friendly people of the land. Pagan thus steadily grew up into an important trade as well as cultural centre of Burma.

It was to the credit of Thamok-darit that this new kingdom of Pagan arose with himself as its founder king. The rapid way it began to grow in importance showed that he was an able ruler. He had no son, but he had a beautiful daughter named Thiri Sanda

Devi (Sri Sandhya Devi). He looked for an accomplished young man whom he could choose as his son-in-law and heir to the throne. Soon he came to know of one such youth by the name Pyu-Saw-Hti, who happened to belong to his own royal family and was noted for his bravery. Sandhya Devi was given in marriage to this young prince. Having been thus heir to the throne of King Thamok-darit, the new son-in-law soon succeeded him under the assumed name of Pyu-Min-Hti. He, in his turn, was succeeded by a number of kings, all belonging to the same Pyu family. During the reign of this Pyu dynasty the kingdom of Pagan was open for a free flow of Indian culture. The coronation of the kings was held in gorgeous Indian style, under the direction of Indian priests and pundits. Even the dates for coronation were settled in consultation with Indian astrologers. Numerous temples, pagodas, and palaces were built on Indian models. In a word, Indian influences were received in great profusion in all the important affairs of the State.

Thus the earliest three successive kingdoms of Tagaung, Prome or Thiri Kettara, and Pagan, which were called the first Burmese kingdoms, had for their rulers Indians, pure in early periods and later perhaps some composite formations. The people were Burmans or, as in Prome, mixture of Burmans and Indians. The first Burmese kingdom at Tagaung was for the most part, if not wholly, a Hindu kingdom. The great Lord Buddha was not yet born. When subsequently Buddhism arose, following the great Enlightenment, this kingdom was slowly decaying, and in course of a century it finally came to an end. But fresh streams of Indian immigrants and their culture continued to come in as before. It is quite conceivable that the new rising cult of Buddhism, which had just begun to spread in India, was also pouring in along with the old faith. But when Tagaung fell neither the dominant Brahmanic culture nor the new faith could prosper there in the total absence of royal



patronage. In Prome the situation was at first characterized similarly by the predominance of the Brahmanic culture with the new faith showing increasing vigour to raise its head. Inevitably there was a good deal of conflict between the two systems of religious belief, old and new, and in the process of conflict there was some intermingling of one with the other. Meanwhile, in India, the rapidly growing power of Buddhism had its reverberating influences over Burma. Steadily Buddhism began to assert its supremacy over Brahmanism. The kings of Prome, in its later stages, were slowly being won over to Buddhism, and the last few of them were professedly Buddhists. King Thu-mon-dri (Sumantri), for instance, was undoubtedly a Buddhist and his royal court was predominantly represented by the followers of Lord Buddha. Since then it was Buddhism under the direct patronage of the ruling chief and his family which began to prevail in the kingdom, while its old rival decayed and ultimately disappeared. So when Pagan arose under Thamok-darit, a nephew of the last king of Prome, it obviously arose as a Buddhist kingdom. Brahmanism got no more chance to raise its head. To whatever extent it might have spread in ancient Burma it had ultimately to yield its place to the mighty onrush of the youthful culture which grew around the new religion of Buddhism. The Burmans by nature found the new democratic ideal of Buddhistic life more agreeable to them than the caste-ridden ideal of the older faith. Buddhism had really come to stay in Burma.

But what type of Buddhism was it that came to prevail over this early Burmese kingdom? Was it the Theravada type which is more popularly known as Hinayana Buddhism, or was it the Mahayana? Of course, the earliest arrival was free from any sectarian tradition, the pure essentials of Buddhism. But when after the second Buddhist Council held at Vaisali, there was a split among the leaders of the new faith resulting in the rise of two Buddhist schools, the Hinayana and

the Mahayana, Buddhism in the Burmese kingdom had to take the name of the one or the other. Tradition reveals that it took the distinct form of Mahayana Buddhism, being upheld by those Buddhist preachers who came from the northern region of India. This is the liberal form of Buddhism as distinguished from the orthodox Hinayana form, allowing within its spiritual ambit some ideas and practices of Brahmanism and other cults. Its scriptures were written in Sanskrit or Devanagari character. It found favour in the early history of Burma because it could make some compromises with the old naive faith of the people. It not only did not oppose the people professing some aspects of their old animistic belief along with Buddhism but even opened the door to some other exotic religious cults like Tantrism which had long flourished in the eastern part of India, more especially in Bengal and Assam. This Tantrism was, as one writer has recently and quite aptly described it, 'a debased ritualistic and magical arcanum similar to the witchcraft of Medieval Europe. The Tantric practices in vogue at that time consisted of divination, necromancy, various kinds of enchantment, and the cultivation of supernatural powers, following very closely lines familiar to students of European witchcraft. It was through them that the Shakti (female consort) became prevalent. Whereas Buddha had taught a discipline of celibacy for monks and a strict moral code for laymen, the Shakti cult encouraged its priests to have wives and consorts, and the rituals in which they jointly took part were based upon erotic mysticism'.<sup>2</sup> This sort of Tantrism came into Burma and sought popularity by associating itself with the local Nāga or dragon worship, led by a class of Burmese priests called *aris*. The priests had their own peculiar morals, which, though somewhat grotesque if not revolting to the high puritanic conception of life, seemed to appeal to the popular sentiment in conso-

<sup>2</sup> Francis Story: 'The Decay and Disappearance of Buddhism', *Mahābodhi*, Volume 57, June 1949.



nance with the simple manners and customs of the time. Animism is the earliest form of all religious evolution. It is the first manifestation of the mystical nature in man. In Burma this animism assumed the name of Naga worship and then developed widely into a worship of spirit or *nat*, as a sort of presiding deity of practically every natural phenomenon that had some striking inspirational value. Inevitably it also included the worship of the surviving spirits of dead ancestors. The Tantric cult of India came to give this animistic faith a more systematized and rational outlook. It made the people's belief more vitalized and wide-spread so much so that for a long time the two in their combined form became far more dominant in the life of the people than Buddhism with all its transcendental ideas and ideal. The Mahayana Buddhism became very much mixed up with this popular faith and thus paved the way to its Tibetan offshoots like Lamaism and Shamanism to come in and flourish in all forms of magic, divination, and necromancy.

The whole kingdom of Pagan was full of all this religious hodge-podge and it thrived well for many centuries, often under ardent royal patronage. It reached its culmination in the early part of the tenth century when Popa Saw-Yahan was on the throne. Indian teachers and preachers of all sorts of religious ideas poured into Burma and sought adherents to their respective schools of thought and belief. They all were held in reverence and hence their influence over the people grew apace. But this made the general cultural situation of the period as degradingly chaotic as it could be, the people being thrown into a maze of beliefs and practices that were quite loose and incoherent. Buddhism became almost a thinly overlaid religion. Time came when Burma badly needed a strong and sagacious ruler who could see the unfortunate conditions of the people and finally undertake to bring about a healthy reform. The need was fulfilled when in 1044 Anawratha became the king of Pagan. What this king actually did to reform his people we shall see later.

But we have been speaking so far about the land inhabited by a race of people who were at first known as *Pyus* and whose descendants later called themselves Burmans. Living in the rugged part of Upper Burma, they grew up into a virile and dominant power, both politically and culturally, to gradually assume the central role over the entire land. Burmese history centres round the people who originally inhabited Upper Burma and then gradually through various adventures including wars established their power over others.

This, however, does not mean the racial groups in other parts of the country were making no history of their own. Indeed some of these groups had developed much to their credit distinct cultural patterns which had preceded and enriched the central cultural history of Burma.

To a little west across the long range of mountains called the Arakan Yomas there is another type of people whose ancestors had built up a history of which they claim to be justly proud. These people were racially and culturally even more near to the Indians than the Burmans proper. They were the Arakanese who, on account of their comparatively easier communication with the mainland of India, both by sea and on land than with Burma proper, had naturally built up a distinct history showing closer political and cultural affinity with the people of India up to the end of the eighteenth century. The present Arakanese maintain that their antiquity is much superior to the Burmese. Indeed they seem to think that it is nearly as old as the history of India. Their history tells us of a list of two hundred and twenty-seven kings who ruled over Arakan between 2666 B.C. and 1782 A.D. when the land was finally annexed to Burma. The kings were mostly of Indian origin. The Brahmanic tradition in Arakan is indicated by the word Chandra which was associated with the name of every Arakanese king, especially from 783 to 957 A.D. It is said that the medallions which those kings used to wear had Devanagari



characters on them, as also the well-known trident of the Hindu god Shiva. Owing to easier communication Buddhism might have reached Arakan earlier. The famous Mahamuni image of Lord Buddha was made by the Arakanese sometime in the middle of the second century of the Christian era when Sandathuriya (Chandra-Surya) was the ruling chief of Arakan. Unlike most other huge images of Buddha worshipped in the numerous large and small pagodas that stand in their resplendent glory of long ages, this Mahamuni wears a face which remarkably reveals in its feature almost a perfect resemblance with the Indian. It was indeed the supreme pride of the Arakanese, and not a few Burmese kings had looked at it with covetous eyes and anxiously sought to seize an opportunity to remove it away to their own capital city. The tall rugged Yoma range stood in their way. But what had appeared to be simply impossible to other Burmese kings was finally made possible by king Bodawpaya who succeeded in transporting this grand masterpiece of Arakanese craftsmanship to his capital city of Mandalay.

Although there is no authentic history of ancient Arakan available to us, the conception of the Brahmanic culture flourishing extensively in this region long before the arrival of Buddhism can by no means be set aside as a mere conjecture. The old traditions and customs, the orthodox religious

observances and the caste practices of most of the present-day Arakanese in Arakan as well as in other parts of Burma will bear unmistakable testimony to this fact. I myself have seen extensive colonies of these people in Mandalay and in other nearby towns, all proudly wearing the sacred thread, regularly painting their foreheads and arms with *candan* or some other pastes showing their caste-mark, and uttering every morning some sacred *mantras* to propitiate some Hindu god or goddess. I have seen them pompously celebrating every year all the religious festivals of the Hindus. They would not eat any food cooked by people other than their own, although they are willing to do any menial job in other people's house. But by pointing to this fact I do not mean that Brahmanism still reigns supreme in Arakan. Buddhism is also a popular faith there. And certainly there was a period in ancient Arakan when Brahmanism and Buddhism had their trial of strength through hard struggles. It was on account of these struggles that later Islam succeeded in having a foothold to spread itself among the people. Islam is perhaps now a vigorous and growing faith in Arakan. But even this Islam is more characteristically Indian than otherwise, receiving most of its inspiration from neighbouring Bengal rather than from its original home of Arabia. Moslem Arakan is only an extension of Moslem Bengal.

(To be continued)

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'If there is a want of spirituality in one part of the world, and at the same time that spirituality exists elsewhere, whether we consciously struggle for it or not, that spirituality will find its way to the part where it is needed, and balance the inequality. In the history of the human race, not once or twice, but again and again, it has been the destiny of India in the past to supply spirituality to the world.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# THE EAST AND THE WEST

By L. E. WILLIAMS

More than half a century ago Swami Vivekananda wrote, 'The Voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The Voice of Europe is the voice of politics'. Thus did this wise mind long ago see with extraordinary clarity into what is perhaps the most fundamental cleavage between the two great sections of the world arbitrarily called 'The East' and 'The West'.

The truth of that judgment has been amply substantiated by the historical developments of modern times. The West has shown a progressively increasing concern for the political arrangements of life. Much of what passes for Western culture has been the product of creative minds whose terms of reference have been political-social-economic. The literature, drama, and art of the twentieth century have been largely the expression of socio-political ideas which have been dominant throughout the past fifty years; and as the complexities of Western politics have increased, the expressions of Western culture have become more vague and undefined. Painting has often degenerated into mere impressionistic blurbs, and writing into esoteric babblings or the abnormal analyses of the modern mind made neurotic by the rapidly moving and uncertain events of the political milieu in which it lived and moved and had its being.

As the emphasis upon politics (and the word is here used in the broad sense which Vivekananda intended) grew in the West, the Western mind withdrew more and more from the centre of wisdom where the solution of life's most fundamental problems is to be found. It has become increasingly clear that the vocabulary of politics is one of material power. Contemporary commentators continually resort to such expressions as 'power politics', 'balance of power', 'struggle', 'competition', 'force', 'armaments race', 'air

power', and the whole gamut of military words. As a result of that emphasis, the greatness that is most honoured today is that of physical might. That nation is the greatest which possesses the largest stockpile of atomic weapons, the most battle-ships, the largest air force, the most men under arms.

When the common vocabulary of a people is one of militarism, war becomes inevitable; for, a people's vocabulary is indicative of the force which controls the mind and will of that people. It is psychologically sound to say that the dominant idea of a mind will seek to prove itself by some outward expression of its essential nature. Therefore, the mind dominated by thoughts of power will sooner or later accept war as the fullest and most satisfying expression of itself. This, it seems, is what has happened in the West; and the reason why most attempts to settle international tensions have failed is simply that the dominant vocabulary of the West makes it impossible to think in terms of anything other than physical force.

This mental attitude has been growing so uninterruptedly in the West that wars have been increasing in frequency and intensity. Moreover, it is interesting to note that whatever struggles have appeared in the East in modern times have been cast in the same mould and follow the same general pattern as those of the West. This way of life and thought has brought the whole world to the brink of self-destruction.

Now to call attention to a significant thing in Swami Vivekananda's statement: While the second sentence is in the present tense, the first sentence is in the past tense—'The Voice of Asia *has been* the voice of religion'. No one can deny the fact that Asia has been the seed-bed of all the great religions of the world; and the outstanding names among the



religious prophets—Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Nanak—are those of members of Asiatic nations and races. It would appear that in Asia throughout the ages there has been a congenial atmosphere for the exercise and development of the Spirit.

However one may try to explain this extraordinary fact, it is so; and in a recognition of it lies the suggestion for the meeting of East and West, and the bringing into being of a 'One World' frame of mind. There is a growing consciousness on the part of many people in the West that a new way of life must be found if the world is to be saved from annihilation. If that is true, where will one look for that way? Can it be expected to develop out of the same consciousness that has produced the present state of affairs in the world generally? It hardly seems possible that such can be the case. Is it not more likely to arise out of the union of the spiritual consciousness of the East with the practicality of the West?

When the West has learned to bring its practical nature under the guiding influence of the East's spiritual genius, there will be hope for world understanding and co-operation. When the West can truly appreciate not only Ernest Hemingway but also Rabindranath Tagore, when it can understand both Einstein and Aurobindo, there will have been born that gnostic consciousness of which Sri Aurobindo spoke which will make impossible 'war with its spirit of antagonism and enmity, its brutality, destruction, and ignorant violence, political strife with its perpetual conflict, frequent oppression, dishonesties, turpitudes, selfish interests, its ignorance, ineptitude, and muddle. The arts and crafts would exist, not for any inferior mental or vital amusement, entertainment or leisure, and relieving excitement or pleasure, but as expressions and means of the truth of the Spirit and the beauty and delight of existence'.<sup>1</sup>

It has long been the habit to think in terms of East *or* West. It has been taken for granted by most people that the cultures of the orient and the occident are two separate

and incompatible entities. The thought patterns of the East were held to be so completely different from those of the West as to be unintelligible, at least to the empirical mind of the West. The ways of life, the common approach to both business and leisure, were considered strange, bizarre, and, because they were different, inferior. But there is a growing consciousness in the West that the empirical mind, while producing an amazing material civilization, has somehow failed to create a peaceful and wholly satisfying world. It is a world of fear and uncertainty, of increasing tension and threat. The nerves of the world are at the ragged edge; and the people cry for peace, but there is no peace. We seem to live in a world that is all questions, the answers to which always elude us. On the whole, it is not a comfortable world; and the West is more and more aware of it, but does not seem to know what to do about it.

The time has come when the dichotomy of East *or* West must give way to the amalgam of East *and* West. There is undoubtedly much in the West that could benefit the East—for one thing, better methods for the production and distribution of the essentials of life, but there is probably more in the East that would help the West. If the West can help the material side of life, if it can give the technical knowledge and skill needed to raise the standard of living for people everywhere, the East can strengthen man's spiritual nature. And this is the greater need; for the break-down of world morality is a symptom of the desiccation of the Spirit. Man's peace is not to be found in the abundance of things which he possesses, but in an inner serenity. His mind must develop a 'modus operandi' which goes beyond the excellence of engineering into the far reaches of Reality and which understands that Life is more important than mere existence. To this end the wisdom of the East can make an inestimable contribution. The exigencies of the present demand a true meeting of East *and* West, out of which will emerge that 'One World' about which men of goodwill everywhere dream.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, p. 944.



# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

It was a memorable day in my life when for the first time I had the privilege of coming in contact with the Holy Mother (Saradamani Devi) in Calcutta. I was then a schoolboy preparing for the Entrance examination. It was about the middle of 1895.

I would frequently go to Swami Yogananda who then resided at Balaram Bose's house at 57, Ramkanta Bose's Street, Baghbazar, in the northern part of Calcutta. He occupied the room where Sri Ramakrishna used to take rest whenever he came there from Dakshineswar to meet his disciples and devotees. This room had been converted as the bedroom of Swami Yogananda, who used to sit in the hall adjoining it and give spiritual talks to the devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna that came to visit him there. This hall was sometimes occupied by the Sannyasins of the Math which was then situated at Alambazar. The hall was also used as a parlour by Ramakrishna Bose, the son of Balaram Bose. It is needless to mention that the whole family of Ramakrishna Bose was devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and his Sannyasin disciples. Sri Ramakrishna used to mention Balaram Bose as one of his *rasad-dārs* (suppliers of his needs). His piety, devotion, and love, his munificence and his sincere eagerness for serving the Master and his beloved disciples, his pure, noble, and ideal character are well known to the readers of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Līlāprasanga*. Out of reverence for Balaram Bose, people called the house as 'Balaram Mandir', sanctified by Sri Ramakrishna and also by his spiritual consort—the Holy Mother, by Swami Vivekananda and his Gurubhais and their disciples and devotees. The hall, together with the said room, is now used as a sanctuary—the room as a temple of Sri Ramakrishna and the hall as a place for

holding religious discourses, devotional songs, and *kīrtan*.

It was from Swami Yogananda that I first came to know that the Holy Mother had come to Calcutta and was residing at the house of one Sarat Sarkar, a young devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. The house was situated in a narrow lane just to the west of Balaram Mandir.

Next day, in the morning, after taking a dip in the Ganges, I went there, with some flowers—mainly red lotuses—and sweets. At the entrance of the house was standing Sarat Sarkar, who led me to a big room on the upper storey and told me to wait as the Holy Mother was then performing Puja. He then sent one of his relations to inform the Holy Mother about my having come for her *darśan*. Within a quarter of an hour I was asked by Golap Mā to come and meet the Holy Mother. Golap Ma had been standing at the threshold of a room situated to the north of and adjoining that where I had been waiting.

With a throbbing heart, filled with emotion, I slowly advanced towards the room, after handing over the sweets to Golap Ma (whom I did not know till then but came to know her afterwards from Sarat Sarkar). I saw the Holy Mother standing by the side of Golap Ma. A white sheet of cloth covered her entire body, but her feet were uncovered. I reverently placed all the flowers at her feet, and made obeisance, with deep veneration. Absolute silence prevailed all round and I was quite a stranger to both of them. In silence the Holy Mother placed her hand on my head as a blessing. It was a divine touch of affection and benediction which enthralled me. I felt in her presence a thrill, an elevating influence, the depth of which, as a boy, I could not fathom then; but nevertheless I was conscious of a sense of sublimity which



that solemn atmosphere had instilled into me. There was no talk between us and she put no questions about me. In a few minutes when Mother had gone away, Golap Ma offered me some fruits and sweets as *prasād*. I went downstairs, with great exultation, and met Swami Trigunatitananda, who was then entering the house. He smilingly told me, 'Oh, I see that you are a very clever boy! In my absence you quietly came and saw the Holy Mother'.

It will not be inconsistent to mention here that Swami Trigunatitananda used to stay at that house then in order to look after the Holy Mother and attend to the comforts of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna that came there for her *darśan*. Swami Yogananda too took special care to look after the comforts of the Mother. I considered myself fortunate that I first saw the Mother through the kindness of Swami Yogananda.

Since then I used to go to see the Mother almost every day. After taking my bath in the Ganges, I would go with flowers to Sarat Sarkar's house for Mother's *darśan*. The Holy Mother stayed there for about a month and then went to Jayrambati. Though my name only had been mentioned to her, she never enquired who or what I was. Whenever I went to her she was gracious enough to appear before me, with Golap Ma or some other woman attendant, and to allow me to offer flowers at her feet. There would be no talk, no searching enquiry as to who I was or whence I came. I used to offer flowers at her feet, like a worshipper would before his divine image. Yes, an Image—not made of clay, stone, or bronze, but a living, ideal, human being. Undisturbed silence would prevail during my visits, but this silence was not dumb or mute. It was far more communicative than spoken words. This silence was sublime, solemn, purifying, and penetrating. It glistened with grace and a sweet tenderness springing from the perennial flow of the living kindness of the divine Mother. Even as a boy I felt this silence was neither a natural shyness before a stranger or a mere

formality of social convention, but a sacred silent communication which touched the innermost recess of one's heart and stirred up a feeling of hope and security. In my boyish sentiment I imagined that as the secrets of God are hidden, even so the unbounded grace and affection of the Holy Mother were hidden under the cover of her person. Her great and powerful presence cleansed the thoughts of my heart and inspired me with elevating ideas and lofty ideals. During these silent interviews with the Mother I cannot recollect even a single day when I was not blessed with a new inspiration of hope and peace and I always felt inwardly that I came to one who was more than my parents.

Swami Trigunatitananda often took me to task for going frequently to the Swamis at Balamandir and Alambazar Math and thereby neglecting my studies. He reproachfully told me, 'Well, boy, you must read your school text-books attentively. Do you think that realization of God is an easy matter? One who cannot concentrate his mind on his studies can never do so in prayer and meditation. It is far more difficult than the passing of examinations. First acquire knowledge through books and lead a pure and clean life which will help you in meditation and prayer'. I remained silent and listened to his advice with reverence. As I used to go there almost every day for meeting the Holy Mother, Swami Trigunatitananda was very kind and gave me a Stotra on Holy Mother composed by him in Sanskrit after the manner of the *Candī*. He advised me to recite it every day early in the morning. It was a fairly big Stotra, but unfortunately it was lost by a neighbour of mine who took it from me.

Manindra Krishna Gupta, a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a good friend and next-door neighbour of mine, was the grand-nephew of the illustrious poet of Bengal, Iswara Chandra Gupta, who was also a great literary genius. Iswara Chandra edited a Bengali daily, and Manindra continued to edit and manage the paper. When Swami Vivekananda returned from the West in 1897,



Manindra was in extreme financial stringency. Swamiji heard all about it from his Gurubhais. One day he called him and helped him privately with a sum of one thousand rupees as a gift. The Swamis of the Math and other devotees used to come to Manindra's house occasionally. They all looked upon him as one of their Gurubhais and called him Khokā or Mani. In the course of conversation, the Holy Mother once told me, 'Manindra was a mere boy when he came to Thākur (meaning Sri Ramakrishna). During his illness Manindra and another boy of the same age were fanning him on *Dol-yātrā* (*Holi*) day. Many others were playing outside with coloured water as is usual on that occasion. Thakur insisted on their going and joining the merry festival. But they did not move and continued to fan him. At this, Thakur, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "Ah, my Rāmlālā is serving me through these boys. They are my Rāmlālā".'

One day, in our presence, Swami Trigunatitananda read out to Mother a letter from Swami Vivekananda. It was addressed to his Gurubhais in the Math and Swamiji enquired therein how the expenses of the Mother were being met. He had asked them all to read the letter and also to have it read before the Holy Mother, Golap Ma, and Yogin Ma, and had appealed to his Gurubhais to preach the message of Sri Ramakrishna and devote their lives for doing good to others, even at the cost of sacrificing everything for that ideal. All were silent and felt inspired with the high ideal of Sri Ramakrishna as put by Swamiji. After a few minutes Golap Ma, addressing Swami Trigunatitananda, said, 'Well, Sārādā (that was his pre-monastic name), Mother says, "Naren is an instrument of Thakur who makes him write these words for inspiring his children and devotees for doing his work, for doing good to all in the world. What Naren writes is true and must take effect hereafter"'. All present were delighted to hear these words of the Mother, giving vent as it were to their own feelings which were surging within their hearts, but could not be expressed

in words. That day was a blessed day indeed!

A thrilling sensation passed through my veins in that solemn atmosphere. We all returned home with a unique fulness in our hearts and unbounded reverence and admiration for Swamiji, bearing in our minds the pertinent remarks of the Holy Mother. Referring to this stay of the Mother in the house of Sarat Sarkar, his friends and others would say, 'Sarat, you have performed Durga Puja for about a month where people do it for three days only. Whereas they worship a clay image, you have worshipped a living image of the Divine Mother'.

It was November 1895, during which month the Holy Mother performed the Jagaddhātri Puja, as she used to do every year. Though I could not go to Jayrambati (where Mother was staying at the time) for the occasion, owing to special circumstances, other friends who went there came back and related to me graphic descriptions of the place and its charming surroundings. Mother was so kind and affectionate that she looked after them as her own children and they all were comfortable and happy. In one voice they told me that they never experienced such motherly care and affection even in their own homes.

A middle-aged gentleman who came back with the above party from Jayrambati and stayed with Manindra for two or three days, had a keen desire for obtaining the blessings of a Guru who could help him in the path of spiritual practice for reaching the desired goal. He could not attend to his normal duties as usual, and always felt eager how he could proceed onward in spiritual life. One night he saw in a dream a brilliantly radiant figure whom he could at once recognize as Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna pointed to him a woman with equal brilliance and commanded him to go to Jayrambati. The gentleman at once started alone for the place. He reached Jayrambati and saw the Holy Mother. He was received by the Mother with great warmth of affection and kindness. On



the day of the Jagaddhatri Puja he was initiated by Mother. He told me that he was surprised when he saw the Mother—exactly the same as he had seen in his dream. In this connection Manindra also remarked that

he had heard Sri Ramakrishna say, during his illness, 'My work has been half done and she (meaning his spiritual consort, the Holy Mother) will do the rest for the good of humanity'.

(To be continued)

## GOD IN A GODLESS WORLD

BY ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

Nations and peoples are today trying to build up their States on a-moral and atheistic foundations. It has become the fashion in 'civilized' societies of the present day to brand theists as reactionaries and scientific materialists as progressives. Opportunism and hedonism unveil their heads in the diplomatic and political conclaves. The most shameless, outspoken, criminal imbecilities are being planned and perpetrated even by Governments before the peoples of the world and yet the thoughtful and the righteous few feel impotent to raise their little finger against them. Plato had said that if the wise and judicious retire from Government and politics, the unwise and unjudicious will govern and manipulate them and the people. But things cannot be allowed to run their course and let peoples and nations die in the strife.

The youth of the country cannot be left to the mercy of a materialistic typhoon, nor can the country move forward without having a sure hold on ethical values, on humanity, justice, and righteousness. The source of all these imponderable spiritual values is the God of saints, heroes, prophets, philosophers, and thinkers. Does God exist? What is God? Has the idea and acceptance of God any practical bearing on our everyday life? Is God a figment of the weaklings just to deceive themselves and others, just to exploit the masses, or is God a living reality, Reality of all realities (*satyasya satyam*), the alpha and omega of the universe, the source of

invincible energy and unending creativity, the raft of salvation and the source of eternal happiness for the *homo sapiens*? These and allied questions were asked and answered in every century and in every generation by all thoughtful and conscientious minds everywhere. The question and answer should be raised and given from time to time, for, on such questions and answers depends the life of man more truly than on food and water.

Thought is power; knowledge is power. Ideas have legs and feet. The most powerful men of history, from the ancient days of Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome, India, and China, were those who have had their character based on the idea of God—not a God of dogmas and definitions, but a God of realization and experience—, having their minds and hearts rooted in the Infinite Reality, in Consciousness Pure.

Our life and behaviour, our achievements and failures, are nothing but the outward expressions of our inner convictions and realizations. The mind is diaphanous and blank. It is receptive to any light thrown upon it, as the sensitive film in a photographic camera. That is the reason why society and the State must take practical steps to the end that the young citizens may have such lofty ideas and ideals by which they can grow to their fullest personality, unfold their latent powers, and be useful servants of their country and of humanity. A man is what his mind makes of him. A healthy mind compels the body to



adjust to its healthy state. Body and mind are interlinked; but body is but a tool of the mind, as mind is but a tool of the superior forces of the spiritual world. As the body must be subservient to the mind to maintain harmony and poise of the individual, so both the mind and the heart should maintain harmony with God so that man may be what Nature intends him to be, viz. to lead a life worthy of human beings, to live up to the high principles and ideals of the greatest representative men of humanity, and to serve the cause of the poor, the persecuted, and the lost.

Pythagoras, Plato, Zeno, Seneca, Cicero, Pericles, Herodotus, Moses, Paul, Solomon, Yājñavalkya, Manu, Mencius, Confucius, Shankara, Ramanuja, Milton, Dante, Tulasidas, Galileo, Bacon, Newton, and a thousand other great names we recall from the history of nations were all master minds become strong, powerful, and useful through their firm hold on God and Reality. The term, 'God' stands not only for the Supreme Reality or the Universal Self or Oversoul viewed as objective reality, the eternal 'Thou' of human hearts, but also for the higher values of life, the suprasensuous experiences and realizations. It is in this sense Socrates uttered the following prayer: 'O beloved Pan, and all ye other gods of this place, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man, and that whatever outward things I have may be at peace with those within. May I deem the wise man rich, and may I have such a portion of gold as none but a prudent man can either bear or employ'.

The ideas of justice, prudence, wisdom, equity, chastity, modesty, sincerity, truthfulness, and as many other virtues that adorn the life of an individual in social living return with redoubled force the moment the godless person turns godly and the prodigal son returns to the lap of 'Our Father who art in heaven' and the Mother of the universe. There is no ground for moral virtues save in a living faith in a living God. Immanuel Kant, who could not reach God through the

'*Critique of Pure Reason*', had to enter the sanctuary of God through the '*Critique of Practical Reason*'. In the whole history of mankind we do not see one instance of a human being who has risen superior to animal instincts and reached perfection in humanity save through faith in God or ethical and spiritual values in life. The God of official high priests and dogmatic theologians is the God who sits somewhere up in the heavens, with a weighing balance to judge who is orthodox and who is a heretic and condemn the latter into eternal hell-fires. But the God of living hearts is the God of undying values, the God who lives in and suffers through the poor and the downtrodden,—the *daridra-nārāyaṇa*,—the God of the sinner and the saint, the evolved and the evolving, the substance and the shadow of the visible and invisible universes.

What God Himself is it is difficult indeed to know, much more difficult to express and understand. But the fact that there is some suprasensible Reality creating, preserving, and dissolving the universe, something that is the source of all that really exists in the form of goodness, truth, and beauty, in other words, the Prime Mover of all, could be perceived very clearly by any purified, unsophisticated, and healthy mind. We all exist, so God exists. Universe, the shadow, exists; so God, the Substance, exists. The whole world is in a state of flux and movement; so the Unmoved Mover of all exists. Good and better forms of goodness exist; so Goodness itself exists. Mineral matter and inorganic substances act along the prescribed laws and so the wise Law Giver and Moving Intelligence presides over the entire world. Injustice triumphs and justice is persecuted; so the scenes of this world cannot be the be-all and end-all of everything. There must be a righteous Judge who watches and ordains everything according to righteousness which men often fail to secure in this world. The watch-maker sets the wheels and machinery in order and the watch functions correctly. A similar though much bigger machinery is the universe,



whose intelligent guide and maker must also exist.

Perhaps such arguments which the advocates of God's existence bring forward are for the common man, for the average intelligence. But better than proofs and arguments we see the existence of God and His working established in the lives and experiences of great minds. Books and proofs are theories ; but experience is direct evidence. The lives of saints like Francis of Assisi, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Swedenborg, Tukaram, Kabir, Nanak, Mohammed, and Jesus are the supreme patterns of history. These and women like Judith, Susanna, Mirabai, and Joan of Arc—who have mounted the pinnacles of divine wisdom—reached and realized God, touched and spoke with God, and have stood out as the eternal challenge of spirit over matter. Their lives are the best commentary on and document for God, and as long as man remains man, their challenge remains perennial.

What then about the other side of the medal? The challenge of the Epicureans and Chārvākas, of Karl Marx and the modern materialists, atheists, and nihilists? Marx and Lenin were theists in so far as they advocated the cause of the exploited and downtrodden millions everywhere. Had they not been humanists, humanitarians, and champions of social and economic justice on behalf of the victims of exploitation, their gospel and message would have withered away at the first tropic heat-wave. The prophets of modern socialism found it more vital to insist upon the economic side of life, on the exploitation of labour by capital, than to write treatises on theology and metaphysics to bring a better socio-economic order in society. As man is his mind, mind is his thought, thought is his God, *logos* or *cit*, it follows that for men like Marx and Lenin, and prior to them to prophets of socialistic ethics, their God was socio-economic justice, which itself is the evident proof that they were not purely hedonists and materialists as some of their professed but thoughtless followers would think. As Swami

Vivekananda rightly says, religion is not for empty bellies.

Even if the God of theology and the priests go, the God of justice and righteousness, the God of the poor, exploited, benighted, and dwarfed humanity cannot afford to go. God is Truth and Justice. Godlessness is untruth and injustice. To fight against injustice and untruth is itself the best apology and defence of God and godliness. God is the living Presence that works and struggles in and through His servants, His tools, for the liberation of enslaved humanity. Speaking of His divine mission, Jesus says: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach the deliverance to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord'.

What has been the real cause of modern soulless atheism and atheistic materialism is not Marx or Engels, but the same old lust and greed of unredeemed man for sensual pleasures and enjoyments even to the extent of denying the Spirit. Says St. Augustine: 'Two kinds of love built up two cities. The love of God created the celestial city to the contempt of self, and the love of self created the terrestrial city to the contempt of God'. This eternal conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, the Real and the apparent, the forces of Light and the forces of darkness continue to this day. The more intense the materialistic atheism, under the pressure of a soulless mechanistic civilization, the brighter shines the realm of God and godliness, in so far as men have to assert their godliness and holiness in the teeth of greater opposition than even during the centuries of martyrdom. The greater the trial of gold in the fire the better the chance of its being purified. So God and godliness shine better in a society given to worldliness. Night reveals the joy of day better, and war reveals the glory of peace better. Says the *Koran*: 'I was as a gem concealed ; me my burning ray revealed'.



In India, the land of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, God is not only a reality, ingrained in our very blood, but also the very soul and essence of our civilization. The Upanishads and Vedānta are the 'Himalayas of the soul', not merely books or doctrines. India will cease to be India when she has discarded the God of the Upanishads and Vedānta. On this Vedāntic basis India has all the bright prospects and opportunities for her full regeneration—social reforms, economic justice, and politico-military progress. God is the corner-stone of the edifice of Indian civilization.

On the other hand, the struggle against gross materialistic hedonism should not mean encouragement of and support to any sort of priestcraft or narrow communalism which may divide men and nations against one another in the name of God and religion. It is against such priestcraft that Buddha protested, by remaining silent about God; and the modern protest against religion is not directed against godliness, justice, and spiritual values.

Today God realization is not anything apart from righteousness, ethical progress, and spiritual values. To defend the defenceless, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and to emancipate the socially and economically enslaved millions is as much religion in practice as to perform rituals and worship and pray in temples, churches, and mosques. It is this God-in-Man that lives and reigns supreme amidst the changing conditions of the world. God is the inner urge to grow from within, to reach the highest spiritual perfection and freedom. God is godliness in act, sincerity, purity, honesty, courage, devotion, strength, and wisdom. It is the denial of

these imponderable spiritual values and ethical principles in human life that really constitutes the denial of God and godliness. It is against such godlessness that the champions of humanity and social justice are called upon to wage the new crusade. Knowledge, self-culture, wisdom, purity, studiousness, valour, and courage are all the manifestations of godliness. It is through such godliness that man conquers the antispiritual and antisocial forces that lie within him and without, and reigns victorious in history, transcending time and space. The best in the cultural traditions of all civilizations are thus vindicated, preserved, and enhanced.

In a world given to the orgy of violence and imbecility, God returns in the form of harmony, integration, inner poise, moral power, and creative urge for the emancipation of the dumb millions everywhere. Godliness and ungodliness may be transcended in the Absolute. But in the tug of war of the dual opposites and the dialectic of history, God and godliness is the positive side, the source of all strength, fearlessness, inner purity, indomitable will-power, and unsullied character. Man may lose his humanity, the gods their divinity; stars may fall off from their orbits and the forces of Nature may go astray from the pre-ordained path, but God and godliness will remain and will triumph as long as there is one single thinking brain and feeling heart, for, God is the Ideal Man to whom men and nations look up ever. There is no other path that can ensure peace and happiness, integration and equipoise, progress and prosperity for individuals and nations. There could be no better way—*na anyāḥ pañthā vidyate ayanāya*.

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'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings, by His Maya, to revolve, (as if) mounted on a machine.'

—*Bhagavad Gita*



# IDEOLOGICAL PERVERSIONS AND WORLD UNITY

By S. N. RAO

Conflict in the modern world is not wholly ideological. Ideology, though undoubtedly a force in shaping the conduct and character of nations, does not by itself constitute the immediate or the final cause of conflict in the modern world. Behind all ideology, there is man, the 'great unknown'. Nature has been conquered on many fronts but not on the human front. Notwithstanding all our advance in the science of human psychology, we are yet to know what the soul of mankind is and where it lies.

Science and technology, in the evolution of time and in the process of history, have brought all countries and peoples nearer and nearer, so that today they have become almost next-door neighbours. No nation or country, whatever may be their system of thought, ethics, and religion, can any longer remain isolated and self-contained, each in its own shell. Clash and collision, however inevitable in that process, cannot now offer any solution to the present-day problems of humanity. The world has reached a stage in the evolution of humanity, a stage which humanity never experienced before. It is a new condition, a new status in which the problems facing humanity cannot be considered in isolation. They can be solved only by taking the whole world as one single unit. We need a new philosophy of life, a philosophy which must shape itself to suit this new condition of next-door neighbourliness.

The universe is one but its content is multiple; it is a synthesis of multiples. The unity of mankind is never lost but is unseen and unnoticed in the rich diversity of its content. Life is one, but is lived in a bewildering variety of ways. While there is unity in that diversity, we see only conflict, and we lack wisdom to see the necessary harmony inherent in the multiplicity of exist-

ence. Many is a necessary complement to the One, and neither can have any significance without the other. Differences only add richness and beauty to the real content of life which is ever the same inherently. Just as the richness and beauty of the clay-stuff used by the artist lies in its variety of manifestation in unlimited models of shape and colour, even so the richness and beauty of 'life-stuff' consists in its variety of manifestation. The value and appreciation of the content of life can only be seen and recognized in its variety of manifestation in form, colour, and quality. Any arbitrary reduction of physical or mental diversity into unity, of variety into oneness, will only result in drab uniformity and dull monotony, in regimentation, in restraint of individual liberty, and a denial of individual rights. What is needed is not regimentation and ironing out of differences in human life and human existence, but reconciling and harmonizing of all human relationships. What the world needs is a philosophy of tolerance, a philosophy which would harmonize and finally integrate all human diversities on the basis of the underlying unity hidden deep in the soul of man.

Human emotions play a much greater part in human conduct than what is generally recognized. In any country or nation, the level of culture and civilization is the level where human emotions have their sway, however high may be the developments in science, technology, and other branches of learning. Culprits of culture are a much greater menace to humanity than culprits of ignorance; the latter are much easier redeemed. There is always a certain loss of equilibrium and balance when emotions have their play in human individuals, however high-placed they may be in the councils of nations. Suspicion, fear, greed, discontent, sense of humiliation,



and a desire for revenge, all these latently or patently govern the temper and shape the conduct of individuals as well as of nations. It is this emotional content in man, not his ideological content alone, that is mainly responsible for all that is disruptive and chaotic in this world. Often the ideological dice is heavily loaded with the emotional content. World's sickness is thus neither solely political nor solely economic; it is a moral and spiritual sickness, resulting from the misuse and abuse of the emotional content in man. What the modern world needs is a philosophy of life which would elevate and sublimate human emotions and take away all the vestiges of the brute still lurking in the heart of humanity. Man is not civilized because he comes to know a few secrets hidden in the atom. He is civilized because he comes to know more and more of all that is humane and divine that lies hidden in his soul. Prophets and saints have contributed more towards this consummation of human evolution than any organized religion or codified ethics which every country or nation has possessed in some form or other. What the world needs is an honest and increasing application of the truths revealed in the lives of prophets and saints.

Ideology is a thought-form of the means and method of human betterment, and it should be carefully distinguished from 'idols' or patterns or modes of manifestation in actual practice. The evil that any ideology does lies not so much in the ideology as in its perversions. It is the perversions that bring any ideology into disaffection, disrepute, and decay. Perversions in capitalism, perversions in socialism, perversions in communism, and perversions even in democracy, these are the evils of our civilization. Miscarried capitalism, miscarried socialism, and miscarried democracy, these are the great misfortunes of humanity. They are the resultants of misuse and abuse of the emotional content in man. They arise when greed, monopoly, exploita-

tion, and power-politics enter into any ideology and dominate it. Capitalism, socialism, or communism are not ideals, but only methods and means in the evolution of human economy. Capitalism becomes an evil when simple profit motive is replaced by dishonest profiteering, when free competition and free enterprise are replaced by monopoly grab, unholy exploitation, and brute imperialism. Socialism becomes a menace when it degenerates into an indiscriminate State-monopoly, killing all individual enterprise and individual liberty. Communism becomes atrociously wicked when its doctrines are associated with ruthless purge of all opposition, sabotage, and indiscriminate expropriation of all private rights. Democracy becomes a farce and a tyranny when it degenerates into a steam-roller majority and power-politics. Whether one is a capitalist, a socialist, or a democrat, he himself is responsible for all the perversions in his ideology. Power-politics is only another name for political vandalism, and is present more or less in every country whether it is a democratic State, a socialist State, or a communist State.

In this age of 'one world' order just emerging, the concepts of national freedom and sovereignty have lost their old charm and significance in the philosophy of politics. This new order demands a new spirit, a spirit of interdependence, and of international co-operation. Man has many facets to his life on this planet—religious, social, political, and economic—all being equally important. World unity, if it is to endure, must be achieved at all these levels of human life and activity. All are interconnected and interrelated. Religious unity is possible when there is religious equality; social unity is possible when there is social equality; political unity is possible when there is political equality; economic unity is possible when there is economic equality. World unity demands that we must create conditions and provide opportunities for this equality to prevail in all the facets of human life and human existence.



# THE POWER OF THOUGHTS AND DEEDS

BY SANAT KUMAR ROY CHAUDHURY

In this short essay we shall discuss the question whether our thoughts and deeds as such are capable of producing currents and forces which may influence others, the lives of men or the future of countries. That our speech creates forces or waves which can be caught and made to reproduce it is proved by the radio. Do other actions of human beings generate any forces or waves? Can they be caught and made to reproduce the acts which had generated them? Have they any force or influence? This is our theme.

Postulating the indestructibility of matter, and the fact that energy is never lost but exists in an altered shape, we can say that as all our acts are instances in which we use up energy they must produce some other kind of energy or force, and theoretically it should not be impossible to collect these forces or waves and make them reproduce our actions as it is in the case of the radio.

We have spoken of our acts. Physiological research establishes that our thoughts can be equated in terms of expenditure of energy and on the hypothesis above given it should be possible to catch the currents or waves generated by our thoughts. With the progress and advance of science it is not difficult to foresee a day when the possibilities hinted at above will be converted into realities. What a disturbance and revolution would such an invention bring into our world! No person and no nation will then be able to have any secrets from each other; everything will be revealed by instruments. Secrets like that of the atom bomb or the super hydrogen bomb, the levying of new armies or fighting forces, procuring armaments, etc. will then be open books to all provided with the necessary recording and reproducing instruments. The plans and even the secret thoughts of leaders of opposite groups and factions or political blocks will be

known to each other, and make war impossible. Even in the field of social life the thoughts and plans of antisocial men, thieves, murderers, and the like being known beforehand will be of no use to them. The world then will be a much better place to live in as there will be no wars and no crimes.

We were speaking of mechanical contrivances above. There is, however, good reason to think that we have within ourselves subtle instruments or senses whereby we can divine the thoughts of others and know what is happening beyond our view. We may instance the cases of thought reading, telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. as proving their existence. In India Yogis possess this power and the Yoga Shastra assures the acquisition of such powers if one faithfully follows its precepts. In fact the powers are there latent in all men. In some they function automatically, in others some training and endeavour is necessary before you get them to function.

The mind of man can be said to be an internal sense-organ without whose help none of the bodily physical sensory organs are able to function. According to Hindu Shastras there are five Jñānendriyas or organs of perception, (the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the skin), and five Karmendriyas or organs of action, (the hands, the feet, the mouth, the anus, and the organ of generation). The eleventh organ is the mind, and without its help the others cannot function.

Mind is said to be composed of the Sātvika or sublimated essence of the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air, and Ākāsha or space. Thus composed, the mind would be an ideal instrument to catch all kinds of currents or subtle disturbances in space and to understand their significance. Even without the help of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, or skin, the mind can see, hear, smell, taste, and feel when pro-



perly trained. Things which are beyond the physical, gross sensory organs would be within the reach of man's mind, properly trained to receive and catch all currents or waves of energy. If thoughts and actions produce currents or waves in space, there is no reason why a subtle instrument like the mind of man cannot be able to catch and interpret them. We need not invoke the 'supernatural'. The phenomenon is a psychic and scientific possibility. The powers developed by Yoga are not 'miraculous' powers, but only the natural result of training and use of the mind of whose functions and powers we have at present a very limited and partial knowledge only.

Energy or force which is not in equilibrium must end by doing some work. Our Hindu theory of creation is that when there was disturbance of equilibrium in the primordial Force (*kṣobha*) the three Gunas or 'moving forces' separated and led to creation, and creation will end in dissolution (*laya*) when equilibrium is re-established. It is the unbalance or difference in forces which has led to action in the shape of creation. When the difference will be bridged and balance restored, there will be no more any force to do work and there will necessarily be an end of all action. Modern science has grasped the Truth to this extent that it says that the sun, which is the fountain of all activity for the earth, is radiating heat but ultimately a time will come when there will be no more to give because all the world will be of the same temperature. That will be the end of the world as we know it.

The progress or decay of human races and of men may be explained by the fact that the currents and waves produced by their thoughts and actions reacted on the minds of themselves and their successors and either helped or hindered them. No child, no race ever begins from the beginning. Man is equipped with the achievements of his forefathers, though this is not always patent to us. Thoughts and actions of previous generations are either a help or a hindrance as appears from the case of skilled artisans or vice-addicts.

Doubts, however, assail us when we find that thoughts and actions are having no influence whatever, e.g. in the case of evil acts of conquerors or victors in war or of oppressors who plunder, molest, and torture weak and unarmed people. The thoughts and prayers of the oppressed for their own deliverance and for the punishment or destruction of the oppressors seem to have very little effect. Possibly we should have to judge taking a long-term view, for it would be contrary to all laws that force currents have no effect. Past history of the world favours the view that oppressors do not have it all their own way for all time and their evil acts recoil on them. The collective and concentrated ill will of the oppressed masses and the forces released by their evil acts will undoubtedly shape a scourge for the destruction of the oppressors sometime or other, though it is little comfort to the oppressed unless they can see the nemesis overtaking their tormentors.

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'According to Karma Yoga, the action one has done cannot be destroyed, until it has borne its fruit; no power in nature can stop it from yielding its results. If I do an evil action, I must suffer for it; there is no power in this universe to stop or stay it. Similarly, if I do a good action, there is no power in the universe which can stop its bearing good results. The cause must have its effect; nothing can prevent or restrain this.'

—Swami Vivekananda



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In his lucid and impressive language, Dr. E. A. Pires, Vice-Principal, Central Institute of Education, Delhi, makes a brief but thought-provoking study of *The Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda*. . . .

Writing under the familiar theme *The East and the West*, Prof. L. E. Williams, M.A., B.D., a distinguished educationist, most appropriately reiterates the need for and the importance of a true and lasting world understanding that will enable nations and individuals to transcend artificial barriers,—geographical, political, or racial,—and to unite in a common endeavour for peace and progress. . . .

Sri Sārādāmani Devi or the Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, needs no introduction to our readers. Her spiritual ministration inspired, strengthened, and transformed the inner life of every man, woman, and child who came into contact with her. Sri Kumud Bandhu Sen, who had the rare privilege of intimate association with the Holy Mother and many of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, records, for the benefit of interested readers, his valuable *Reminiscences of the Holy Mother*. . . .

In *God in a Godless World*, the learned writer examines some of the arguments that are usually pressed into service by apologists of modern secularism against the need for or existence of God, and refutes them with clear and convincing logic. . . .

Sri S. N. Rao, Bar-at-Law, a new contributor, impressively analyses the world situation with special reference to the *Ideological Perversions* of the modern age, and offers a sound basis for *World Unity*. . . .

Sri Sanat Kumar Roy Chaudhury, M.A., B.L., a former Mayor of Calcutta, writes lucidly, though briefly, on *The Power of Thoughts and Deeds*.

### RELIGION AND HUMAN WELFARE

'The state of religion in the contemporary world' formed the subject of an illuminating talk by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, given by him at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, some months ago. In a brief but lucid survey, he unveiled, before a crowded gathering, the true spirit and purpose of religion and observed that unless men transformed their outlook on life and took firm hold of the fundamentals of religion, religion could not be expected to solve the problems facing the world today. Dr. Radhakrishnan said:

'Just as national rivalries had divided the world into sixty-one nations, religious rivalries were sterilizing our efforts to unify man. If we properly understood the fundamentals of religion, as adumbrated in our own philosophy, we would see that true religion was a stabilizing factor, giving us tranquillity in our hearts, enabling us to meet the challenges of the world, lifting us from doubt and despair to certitude and hope—producing the spiritualized man who found himself at home in the world of nature, with others, and himself. To him, the world ceases to be a prison'.

What men all the world over want today is a unifying faith and religion can and does offer the basis for such a faith, provided religion is understood and practised in the only way it ought to be done. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, we want a faith in the fundamentals, 'a religion which does not divide man from man but is interested in promoting human welfare, which teaches man to attain perfection through the pursuit of goodness and the discipline of one's will'.

Adverting to the present declining faith in the spirit of religion, he analysed the reasons for the contemporary unsettlement in religious beliefs and answered the oft-repeated criticism that religion is not scientific.

'It was largely due to the forces of science and humanism—the belief that if religion was wedded to a dogmatic doctrine, it became opposed to the spirit of science, and the fact that religion had



been misconstrued and misinterpreted in a way which did violence to the spirit of humanism.

'Our religion, which followed the same empiric way, was utterly scientific. Nature everywhere craved for adjustment. If its spirit was properly understood, it could face not only the challenges of modern science but modern humanists'.

How can religion regain its pristine place in the life of individuals and nations? Through a positive approach and sincere practice. 'We must be loyal not to ideas about God but to God,' Dr. Radhakrishnan emphasized, 'we must raise religion from the intellectual level to the spiritual level'. But it must be borne in mind that 'outward allegiance and inward disloyalty' would prove disastrous before long. 'If we are dishonest in our faith in religion, the only answer would be atheism'. For, 'it is the tragedy and glory of man that he has the power to rise or fall'. And he warned saying, 'If religion continues in its present form it will fail. It should either transform itself or will fail'.

'The object of religion', Dr. Radhakrishnan

said, 'should be to bring people together, make them love each other, and raise standards of life'. His eloquent and convincing statements made it abundantly clear to everyone, including those who still doubted if religion was 'life and world negating', that man could no more discard religion than he could discard his burning faith in his own destiny and divinity:

'What distinguished man from the rest of creation was the endowment of intellect, the power of reason, which enabled him to think, will, and adjust himself—to aim at harmony and the fulfilment of one's own self. There was an element in man which exceeded the objective—the capacity for self-transcendancy. 'Man is made in the image of God'; man in essence was a vehicle of the Divine. It was, therefore, imperative that man should not lose faith in the eternal even when he was facing the challenges of the world. When we act in this world, we must act as if we are citizens of two worlds,—the temporal world and the world eternal where man could find fulfilment. It was that spirit and understanding which made the truly integrated man—the man who had realized his destiny and overcome the world'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MAHATMA (LIFE OF M. K. GANDHI) (VOL. II). BY D. G. TENDULKAR. *Distributors: Publications Department, The Times of India Press, Fort, Bombay-1. Pages 532. Price Rs. 25.*

We heartily welcome this superb Second Volume of the contemplated eight-volume monumental biographical work on Mahatma Gandhi, ably undertaken by the learned author. The First Volume of the series was published some months ago and was duly reviewed in these columns in our issue for January 1952. In the First Volume, the biographer covered the first fifty-one years of Gandhiji's illustrious life, from his birth up to the end of the year 1920, depicting the formative period of the Indian national movement and Gandhiji's emergence in the field of the country's politics. Continuing the narration of this remarkable life-story of one of the greatest men the world has seen, the volume under review deals with an eventful period of about a decade (1920-1929), opening with 'the new epoch or what is called the Gandhian era' and ending with

the passing of the memorable resolution on 'complete independence' at the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress. Recounting in his lucid and fascinating style, Sri Tendulkar, who deserves unstinted praise for his laudable effort and ability, presents within the pages of this volume such stirring occurrences in the life of Gandhiji as the first great launching of the Satyagraha movement, the powerful exchanges between the two master minds of the time—Gandhi and Tagore, the memorable and historic trial of Gandhiji at Ahmedabad, the epic fast of 1924 which Gandhiji called the 'penance for Hindu-Muslim unity', the 39th session of the Congress at Belgaum with Gandhiji as its president, the years of silent but steady activity dominated by the dynamic personality of Gandhiji, the infusion of the new impulse of 'Purna Swaraj' into the youth of the nation, and the march of events on the political scene leading up to the declaration of 'complete independence' as the ultimate goal by the national organization under the presidentship of Sri Jawaharlal Nehru and



the inspiration of Gandhiji. There are vivid descriptions of Gandhiji's experiments with truth, of the great influence he exerted on men, women, and children of every walk of life, of his valuable views on the scriptures, social reform, and cultural and religious revival. Gandhiji's travels across the length and breadth of the country and his visits to Ceylon and Burma are portrayed with a wealth of factual details, interspersed with illuminating quotations from his numerous speeches and writings. The circumstances in which Gandhiji took to the loin-cloth and the life of utter simplicity in order to identify himself completely with the masses (*daridranārāyaṇa*) of the motherland, and the glorious personal life of discipline and self-control which he led and inspired others with at the Sabarmati Ashrama form some of the very interesting and instructive chapters in this volume.

Illustrations and documents in facsimile, some of them of rare variety, abound in this second volume too. In this and in every other respect this volume fully maintains the high standard of production and get-up, already initiated by the first volume. The rich contents of the first volume and their high quality had made it clear that the learned author is no ordinary, formal biographer. The present volume further confirms it, and amply bears out the hopes raised by the earlier one regarding the author's special qualification and natural gift for presenting the life of such a unique personality as Mahatma Gandhi in a realistic and objectively interesting manner. Apart from its primarily biographical importance, the publication has a documentary value of no less importance, containing as it does much material for the guidance of every national worker and also for the future historian and the politician. A helpful Glossary and an exhaustive Index add to the usefulness of the volume.

The publishers hope to bring out the subsequent volumes at an interval of about ten weeks each. There is no doubt that the English-reading public all over the world will eagerly look forward to them.

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY. BY F. MAX MÜLLER. Published by Susil Gupta (India), Ltd., 52/9, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta 12. Pages 114. Price Rs. 1-8.

The book consists of the three well-known lectures on Vedanta philosophy delivered by Prof. Max Müller at the Royal Institution in March 1894. The student of Vedanta hardly needs any introduction to Prof. Max Müller who was one of those few pioneer research workers in Indology, and who, for the first time in the West, unearthed the hidden treasures of Indian civilization and made known

the unique culture of the ancient Indian people all over the world. Indians are particularly indebted to him for his impartial and faithful interpretation of Indian thought to the modern Western mind. Not unoften it is seen that Western scholars look at India with a biased mind and foist incorrect meanings on our ancient Sanskrit texts so as to serve their own interests and purposes. Such attempts are mostly directed at showing the supposed inferiority and comparative recency of everything Indian. But Prof. Max Müller was singularly free from any such disposition, for he was not only a sincere well-wisher of India but had strong faith and was himself firmly grounded in Indian philosophy and religion. Paying a warm tribute to the Professor, Swami Vivekananda, who had met him in England, says: 'Max Müller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has indeed caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta'. He was also a great Sanskrit scholar. As such Prof. Max Müller's knowledge and interpretation of the Vedanta philosophy is sound and can be amply relied upon without hesitation.

In these lectures, Prof. Max Müller presents the lofty Upanishadic philosophy before a highly accomplished gathering. The first lecture is an attempt to trace the origin of Vedanta. The second one systematically deals with the nature of the world, soul, God, Vidyā, Avidyā, etc. The third lecture is a comparative study, giving the similarities and differences between Indian and European philosophy. The author follows mostly Shankara's views in interpreting the Vedanta. He has given lucid and convincing answers to certain charges commonly levelled against Indian philosophy in general and Vedanta in particular. For instance, it is sometimes held that Vedanta is deficient in its being able to supply a solid foundation for morality. Prof. Max Müller meets the objection by saying that Vedanta 'aims at establishing its ethics on the most solid philosophical and religious foundations'. The cultivation of certain rigorous spiritual disciplines (*sādhana-catustaya*) is essential before the study and practice of Vedanta is permitted to be undertaken. Towards the end of the third lecture, Prof. Max Müller has raised a controversial issue, viz., that an individual can and does suffer for the misdeeds of others. He says that some Vedantic teachers (not mentioned) appear to hold this view. Whatever the available evidence to show that such a view has been expressed implicitly or explicitly by any Vedantic teacher, it is well known that such 'collectivism' is foreign to Indian philosophy.

G. P. BHATT



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS

#### GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Banaras, celebrated its Golden Jubilee from the 6th to the 9th March 1952. The celebrations, which were attended by very large gatherings on all the four days, were a grand success.

An exhibition on health and hygiene, held through the courtesy of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, drew large crowds on all the days. Scenes depicting important events in the life of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and pictorial representations showing the growth and expansion of the activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission were exhibited by means of beautiful art drawings and models. On the two sides of the dais were placed artistically decorated portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

The celebrations commenced on the 6th March with a procession led by Swami Vishuddhananda Maharaj, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The Swami formally inaugurated the celebrations with an illuminating speech, bearing on Sevā-dharma. Other Swamis also spoke, elucidating the ideal of service to suffering humanity. In the afternoon, His Highness Sri Vibhuti Narayan Singh Bahadur, Maharaja of Banaras, presided over a meeting at the commencement of which the Secretary of the Home of Service read out a brief report of the activities of the Home for the past half a century. After the presentation of the Secretary's report, speeches were delivered on the ideals of renunciation and service. After the presidential speech, the Maharaja inaugurated the exhibitions. A film show on health and education and also music ended the day's function.

On the 7th March, Sri Krishna Prasad, Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, Government of India, presided over the meeting held in the evening. Illuminating speeches were delivered by Sri Rohit Mehta, General Secretary, Theosophical Society, Pandit Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Head of the Hindi Department, Banaras Hindu University, and Sri Haridas Bhattacharya, Professor, College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University. The President made an excellent speech drawing a sharp distinction between social service as such and the service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission which was virtually a form of worship. This unique type of service, according to him, resulted in the spiritual uplift of the giver and the physical and mental well-being of the recipient.

On the 8th March, Dr. K. C. K. E. Rajah, Director of Health Services, Government of India, inaugurated the X-Ray Department of the Home in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. The Government kindly gave a donation of Rs. 600/- and the proprietors of M. Bhattacharya & Co. of Calcutta gave a generous donation of Rs. 20,000 towards the construction of the X-Ray buildings. Dr. Rajah presided for some time over the day's meeting. As he had to leave Banaras that very evening, Swami Vishuddhananda Maharaj conducted the proceedings of the meeting after his departure. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Head of the Department of Indology, Banaras Hindu University, Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, Professor, Allahabad University, Miss Kartar Kaur Painthal, Headmistress, Central Hindu Girls' School, Banaras and others spoke on India and world peace, service before self, and allied subjects. After the meeting, there was a lantern-lecture on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The day's function ended with music by eminent artistes.

On the 9th March, the last day of the celebrations, Pandit H. N. Kunzru, President, Servants of India Society, was the Chairman of the meeting. Dr. K. K. Bhattacharya, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Allahabad University, Prof. Arabinda Bose, Banaras Hindu University, and Swami Gambhirananda, Assistant Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, made eloquent speeches on the ideal of service as preached by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, nationalism and Swami Vivekananda, and allied subjects. The Chairman said that the Ramakrishna Mission differed from other institutions in this respect that it was the only organization which while following a unique ideal of service has at the same time produced a band of absolutely selfless workers who have dedicated their lives and everything to the service of suffering humanity. A large number of prizes consisting of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, medals, etc. was distributed to the winners of the essay, recitation, and speech competitions which had been held earlier as part of the Jubilee Celebrations, students, both boys and girls, of the local institutions participating therein. Physical feats were demonstrated by a well-known athlete.

The following four publications were made available to the public as part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations: (i) A Golden Jubilee Souvenir; (ii) A Golden Jubilee Memorial Booklet (in English); (iii) A Golden Jubilee Memorial Booklet (in Hindi); (iv) 'Swami Vivekananda's Ideal of Karma Yoga'.



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## SITA LOST

BY ELISE AYLEN

Like the lost Sitā  
My most desolate soul  
Weeps alone in the place of its exile.  
Alas for Rāvana!  
Alas for the golden deer!  
Alas for Sitā!  
Who knows not  
That beyond the barrier of the seas  
Her dear Lord,  
The Divine One,  
Gathers his holy forces  
To fight for her sake  
Against the strong power of evil.  
Not long may they be separate,  
Not long may he endure her loss,  
But even now  
He strives toward her  
In battle and turmoil,  
Never wearying till he find her,  
His own, his lost one.  
Alas for weeping Sita!

That she draws her dear Lord  
To endure so many sorrows,  
And all for her.  
Alas for the golden deer  
That drew her from him!  
Now powerless she sits weeping,  
Nor all her strong sorrow  
Shall avail her  
But he alone,  
Her dear Lord,  
Shall save her,  
In power and tenderness  
Never forsaking,  
Never wearying of his long task  
Till the lost one is found  
And sinks again to rest  
Upon his bosom,  
In peace for ever.  
Alas for Ravana!  
He who waits with cunning  
To snare the seeking soul



Alas for the golden deer!  
 That shone with brightness,  
 Its swift feet glimmering through the woodland.  
 Alas for my soul in its exile!  
 But the Lord,  
 The Divine One,  
 He will not leave me desolate,  
 Alone in my sorrow,  
 But through the world's darkness  
 He seeks me out,  
 Never wearying,

In the power of his love and compassion.  
 Behold my Lord, my Redeemer,  
 He comes to claim me,  
 To seek his own  
 That was lost.  
 Weep no more, O my soul,  
 But greatly rejoice;  
 Forsake thy mourning  
 And rejoice for ever,  
 For behold  
 Thy Redeemer cometh.

## THE PATH OF DEVOTION

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Constant remembrance of God will keep the mind pure. Well, is it any wonder? That 'our wishes are also God's' cannot be clearly felt while one is in the state of ignorance. God is *satya-saṅkalpa* and whatever He wills comes out true, but the wishes of men often turn out to be false. For this reason one cannot say that the wishes of men and the will of God are the same. The truth of everything is felt spontaneously if the intellect is purified by the grace of the Lord.

The supreme benefit of holy company is that it turns the mind from evil ways to the path that leads to the Highest Good. He indeed is a real Sādhū in whose company God-consciousness is awakened. This is an excellent way of making out who is a good Sādhū. Hence Tulasidas says, 'Associate with holy men, it cures others' diseases. But there will be always trouble from the company of the evil'.

Whatever the Lord wills is fulfilled. There is no doubt that whatever the Lord, who is All Good, does is good—whether we are able to understand it or not. Of course there will be boundless joy if only this is understood. When the Sāttvika intelligence dawns, it never allows bad feelings to enter the heart. Good or bad—whatever may happen, the Sāttvika

intelligence sees nothing but good. Such an attitude develops only due to the extraordinary mercy of God, and if it be perfectly mastered all misery vanishes. Wonderful is the grace of the Lord!

The more one talks about and thinks of God and finds joy in this the better. In this world the only Reality is He—the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) has repeatedly given this counsel. A (Bengali) poet has said, 'The happiness we imagine or the suffering we apprehend are never so much when they become actual. But the human mind is always restless in anticipation'. This is only too true. We make ourselves restless by worrying over things unnecessarily; otherwise everything becomes endurable.

The Master used to say that like the water which flows under a bridge, entering on one side and going out of the other, those whose money is spent in a good cause never become bound; though they constantly handle money, they live like the liberated souls. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) also used to say that impurities can't touch those whose money is spent on humanitarian work just as the air inside a room can't get polluted if the door is kept open.



In whatever condition He may choose to keep one, that is the best. If He allows the mind to remain steady in the contemplation of His lotus feet, then, whatever the state one may be in, nothing matters. We have heard the Master say, even in the midst of severe illness, 'Let the suffering and the body take care of themselves, but O mind, be you (always) happy'. If the mind be happy, that is to say, be in God, what does it matter if the body suffers from pain and misery—what can they do? It is the suffering of the mind which is terrible and unbearable. If the Lord graciously keeps that mind attached to His lotus feet, no suffering whatever can appear to be so.

Surdas has said, 'Selling milk and meeting the Lord—both will be done on the same way'. The Gopis used to go out of their houses on the pretext of selling milk in order to join the company of Krishna. So both the purposes were accomplished on the same road. What a beautiful idea! Doing everything for His sake. He before everything, the rest afterwards. There is no other in-

stance of unswerving devotion to Him like that of the Gopis. The more the mind becomes purified, the more this attitude is understood. If there be His grace, there will be no want of anything else.

The thing is, one should devote oneself entirely to Him, whether it be at home or in the forest. Retiring to the forest (renunciation) has no meaning if He is not found. And if you devote your mind to Him, never mind where you stay, there is no fear. He must be found—He alone is to be remembered while rising, sitting, eating, or lying down. Everything will be set right by His grace.

One who is devoted to Him has no cause for fear or anxiety. This is what the Lord says to Arjuna in the *Gita*: 'O son of Kunti, know well and assure all that one who is devoted to Me never perishes'. Pure devotion is rare even among the gods! Can that pure devotion which holds the Lord be easily found? Ramprasad has said, 'Devotion is the root of all; liberation is her handmaid'. In fact, nothing remains to be had when love for the Lord awakens.

## THE PERENNIAL SOURCE OF STRENGTH INVINCIBLE

BY THE EDITOR

*Attā hi attano nātho ko hi nātho paro siyā?  
Attanā hi sudantena nātham labhati dullabham.*

'Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will have obtained that Lord that is difficult to obtain'.

—*Dhammapada*, 160

Strength and power,—physical, moral, and spiritual—, have ever fascinated man from the beginning of time. Human sentiment has always admired and honoured persons cast in the heroic mould. Men have never failed to be hero-worshippers in the compelling presence of those who manifest even a small part of

that strength which is considered superhuman and which sheds rare lustre upon the whole of mankind. The pages of history reveal shining examples of men, who, in their early years seemed no better than the ordinary, but later developed and exhibited invincible prowess. They were such whom no fears could terrify,



no obstacles could deter, and who astounded the world by their unparalleled strength of body and mind. Not a few of them waded through blood to the goal of their desires, inflicting untold suffering on thousands in the wake of the fulfilment of their own evil designs. To those who measure strength by purely physical standards there could be no better means of assuring themselves of their invincibility than by the extent of dominance they can wield or the amount of violence they can spread. Such grossly bestial strength could be admired and appreciated only by those who are themselves slaves to their unrestrained passions and who, in their turn, wish to enslave others and keep them down by the whip.

Apart from these men of great though violent deeds, history records the doings of the spiritual teachers and the social and moral leaders of humanity who doubtless belong to a far higher order of perfection and who have manifested that 'strength invincible' which outshines the valour of the greatest conqueror the world has seen. Without relying on the mere physical strength of muscles or power of armaments, the spiritual heroes in every land exerted immense influence on and held unlimited suzerainty over millions not confined to one country or nationality. They strove for and successfully brought about the much-needed unity among men of various races and creeds not through militant subjugation but through transmutation of their hearts and minds. Their spiritual empire transcended all geographical and national boundaries and embraced the whole of mankind. They have repeatedly urged in their teachings that the perennial source of all strength is the Spirit or Self of man and that this strength is peerless and invincible. They have called upon men not to set store by the superficial strength that is dependent entirely on matter but to invoke and rely on the inner strength of the Spirit (*ātma-bala*) born out of the vision of the Supreme Reality. Shankaracharya says that he who, renouncing all activities, worships in the sacred and stainless shrine of the Ātman,

which is independent of time, place, and distance, which is omnipresent and the bestower of eternal strength, becomes omnipotent and immortal.

It is a great fact of life that strength is indispensable. The joys and beauties of life are obtained by the strong. The weak are more dead than alive. 'Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once'. Strength ennobles man and affords zest and felicity to life. Weakness and fear lead to constant misery and moral and spiritual degradation. No true spiritual giant ever taught the religion of fear. On the other hand, the great scriptures of the world, especially of the Hindus, have always insisted on the need for irresistible moral courage and spiritual strength in the individual's adventurous journey through his vicissitudinous life. 'Strength is goodness, weakness is sin', says Swami Vivekananda, 'If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word "fearlessness"'. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness'. Thus the Upanishads, which contain the Knowledge of the Self—the one source of everything that exists in the universe, proclaim the message of strength and bliss that know no diminution, a message that is as much needed today as it was when first proclaimed. One of the Upanishads clearly states that the Ātman cannot be attained by one who is devoid of strength. Further, we read in the Upanishads: 'That Brahman is a great terror, like a poised thunderbolt. Those who know It become immortal. From terror of Brahman, fire burns; from terror of It, the sun shines; from terror of It, Indra and Vāyu, and Death, the fifth, run'. Thus the Upanishadic thinkers realized that the whole universe vibrates with life, strength, and power because it is a projection of Brahman which is the perennial source of all these.

One of man's chief answers to the challenge of Nature is his resolute striving after perfection by conquest of the limitations



that Nature endlessly confronts man with. Not a day passes without some fresh act of aggression on the part of progressive man in his determined war on Nature and its inexorable laws. The ravages of Nature's relentless processes are a constant reminder to man that he has to develop enough strength and power to be able to withstand them and to reach greater heights in spite of them. Even the crawling worm seems to be conscious of the evolutionary dictum that it has to struggle ceaselessly in life in order to be fit to survive. None today would for a moment think of meekly submitting to the threat of physical force without doing one's utmost to counter the threat by retaliatory action. Nations and individuals are feverishly active in increasing the stock and striking power of their armaments, with the professed intention of gathering sufficient military might that may deter the prospective aggressor. The appeal to physical force has given a fillip to acts of violence in every conceivable form. Absolute reliance on the strength of death-dealing weapons and mechanized armies, has encouraged the folly of increased acquiescence in the inhumanity of man. The haunting fear of ultimate doom, which scientists more than theologians have given rise to, is driving men to reckless pursuits. Might has become the main factor that determines the rights of man everywhere. Could anybody deny that the earth is mad with the intoxication of egotistic power and the thirst of self-seeking that knows no end?

If strength is equated with the aggressive instinct and the will to power, there could possibly be no reasonable solution to the stupid but serious crisis that civilization faces today. While the efforts of right-thinking leaders for the solidification of mankind and the dismantlement of meaningless barriers that divide man from man have been rather slow in bearing fruit, many a designing and selfish seeker of temporal power has not been slow in taking advantage of the appalling human situation all round. Over and above the spiritual bankruptcy that is patent to

every lover of humanity, the lack of control and direction over the tameless passions and prejudices has further aggravated the malady that has afflicted the soul of man. Men have succumbed to the temptation of placing their trust in ephemeral secular and materialistic values. As a human being, rather, a human representation of the Divine, man has lost the awareness of his higher nature rooted in spirituality. Consequently the debasing lure of insolent strength entices man notwithstanding the fact that he is not unaware of the conflicts and tensions which such strength engenders and which are consistently gnawing at the heart.

The doctrine of the sword has blinded many a fanatic and dictator. There is no gainsaying the fact that the need for a certain minimum of physical force may be imperative and not unjust on particular occasions and in specific cases. But to use physical force for gaining selfish ends or to carry it recklessly to extremes is egregious folly. Violence is the law of the brute, which knows no other norm but that of physical might. More often than not even man is seen to behave like an animal, if not worse. Employing more or less external means, natural and mechanical, man seeks to gain mastery over Nature and over his fellow men. In most cases he seeks such power in order to attain some ulterior objective, not always commendable. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes how men of demoniac, unregenerate nature, possessed of egotism, power, and pride and filled with the intoxication of lust and wealth, indulge in wicked deeds. Their self-glorification, which is no less reprehensible, is after this wise: 'This I have gained today, and that longing I will fulfil. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine in future. That enemy have I slain, and others too I will slay. I am the Lord of all; I enjoy; I am prosperous, mighty, and happy. I am rich; I am of high birth. Who else is equal to me? . . . I will rejoice'.

But sooner or later they are disillusioned and disappointed, and finally destroyed by the reactionary forces they themselves have



served to generate and set in motion. Persons with whom sensual pleasures are the sole ultimate good and to whom power under whatever name and by whatever means is the aim of life could hardly be expected to bring to mankind that supreme peace, love, and brotherhood which the great religions unmistakably promise to man. The progress and well-being of humanity would never be safe in the hands of these chartered libertines who gamble with innocent lives in the name of national solidarity and strength and who think nothing of bringing death and destruction to unnumbered millions to satisfy their selfish ends. The world suffers more from weakness, fear, and selfishness than from their opposites. All power, unless chastened by ideals and norms that have their spiritual content intact, is likely to corrupt and make man the next-door neighbour to brutes. Without self-control, which is the core of all religious discipline, there can be no real strength. Everything dependent on an external source for strength is fraught with fear—with constant fear that another external and hostile source of superior strength may overpower it. Renunciation (*vairāgya*), true and complete, alone assures man of strength invincible, born of absolute fearlessness (*abhaya*) under all circumstances. The Upanishads declare: 'He who sees *this* (the Self) does not see death or illness or pain. He who sees *this* sees everything and obtains everything everywhere'. 'He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, from whence all speech, with the mind, turns away, unable to reach It, *fears nothing*'. The Knowledge of the Self liberates man from desire, fear, and all weakness.

What the world wants are character and the adamant strength based on such character. The world is in need of dauntless heroes who are free from any trace of selfishness and whose life is completely dedicated to the welfare of the whole of humanity. Selfless love and sincere fellow-feeling are sources of great strength. They give the individual infinite courage and confidence in dealing with the problems of the community

and make every word of his tell like a thunderbolt. The religious history of man bears ample testimony to the fact that one who renounces the lower, limited self gains universal power and irresistible strength by unfolding and manifesting the vital spiritual forces that form the bed-rock of human personality. Self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. It is seen that when a carriage drawn by horses rushes down a hill unrestrained, the great speed and momentum gathered by it may well-nigh bring disaster to the occupants. But if the horses are restrained and held in proper check, that is certainly a greater and more commendable manifestation of power beneficial to all concerned. All outgoing energy, unregulated and improperly let loose, is of no consequence either to those who possessed it or to those whom it was meant to benefit. Instead, such thoughtless frittering away of power can produce disastrous effects on society.

The source of all strength lies within man, in the Atman. Every soul is divine and is heir to the Strength of all strength. What strength can be greater than to realize that man is non-different from the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute which is the core of all forms of strength one comes across in the world. The power of even the greatest warrior is liable to decline and disappear, and the fear of enemies does not leave him, however strong he may be. On the other hand, the strength born of Self-realization is undiminished and unassailable. It is said that once Alexander the Great came across an Indian monk and having been impressed by the monk's profound wisdom, asked him to go with him to his country. 'No', said the monk, non-chalantly. The Emperor said, 'I will give you money, position, and wealth. I am the Emperor of the world'. 'No', replied the monk, 'I do not care for those things'. Annoyed at this, the Emperor threatened the monk, saying, 'If you do not go I will kill you'. The monk smiled serenely and said, 'That is the most foolish thing you



ever said, Emperor. You cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, fire cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, the ever living, omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit'. Such is the daring of spiritual conviction; such is the strength of a man who has realized God.

Often is it claimed that if the materialistic conception of strength and the mundane idea of progress are not accepted as such, secular ambition and activity are thwarted. This is very far indeed from the actual truth. Those who honestly believe that the conflicts of power in modern culture are inevitable and so act according to this belief can never help politics turning into power-politics and strength degenerating into brute force. The humanist affirmation of the joys and beauties of life, while ensuring for man pleasures and articles of comfort, does not guarantee the mental peace and poise that is indispensable to healthy living, nor does it provide against the none too uncommon retrogression of man. The dignity of man requires obedience to the higher call of the Divine inherent in him and this perforce demands allegiance to the strength of the Spirit. This strength, backed by the inward spiritual force needed to realize it, makes its possessor immortal and earns for him the loyalty and admiration of countless human beings who do not fear him in the least, but greatly love and respect him. The influence exerted on their numerous votaries by Krishna, Buddha, and Christ is deeper and more extensive, though less dazzling to moderners, than that exerted on their small number of followers by Alexander and Caesar. The spiritual power of the former has left indelible impressions on the lives of millions who still adore them as God incarnate. The temporal and transient power of the latter captivated but for a time the gaze of only the men of their age, and even their great personalities have vanished from popular memory and lie buried under the debris of history.

As man advances more and more in his understanding of Nature, the general tendency of the age is to discover the one original source

of energy out of which have come forth all the various forms and degrees of energy known to man. Man's gradual advance from the periphery to the central core of existence cannot but be marked by experiences that apparently reveal differing facets of the one Self. Invincible strength can be had only by discovering its perennial source which is one's own true Self, one's eternal state of Consciousness. All weakness and fear arise from the erroneous identification of the Self with the mere body and the senses. By repeatedly thinking oneself finite and limited, one becomes confirmed in the view that everyone is separate from the rest and that physical force which can control the workings of the body is the greatest strength man should acquire. Ignorance of one's own divinity and omnipotence is the root cause of man's utter helplessness and his dependence on the flimsy security that wealth and armaments afford him.

Gautama Buddha, one of the greatest teachers of the world, who always emphasized the supreme consequence of self-reliance and spiritual strength, unambiguously proclaimed, 'Wherefore, Ananda, do ye abide islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves: taking refuge in none other: islanded by the Norm, taking refuge in the Norm, seeking refuge in none other'. Describing the glories of His divine manifestations in the *Gita*, Krishna concludes: 'There is no end of My divine manifestations. . . . Whatever glorious or beautiful or mighty being exists anywhere, know that it has sprung from but a spark of My splendour. . . . With a single fragment of Myself I stand supporting the whole universe'. It is this unity of the Godhead that pervades all relative existence. The person who seeks to enter this storehouse of infinite power is the great hero (*dhīra*), and once having entered it he finds that he has gained that Strength by which everything else is controlled and actuated.

Restraint and discipline have always been the norm of human conduct. Man was never



expected to exhibit the ferocious strength and courage of a tiger, though often enough men have shown themselves capable of facing the most painful suffering and even death with perfect equanimity. Through the veritable eternities of time and in every land individuals and also groups have possessed remarkable courage of conviction and have boldly sacrificed the lower values for the higher ones. In order to make life on this revolving earth worth while, man has to constantly discriminate and renounce the lower manifestations of power for the attainment of the higher manifestations, and later renounce these also for attaining the highest transcendental Power. Spiritual values, which include and transcend moral and material values, stand at the apex of the pyramid of human aspirations. The mainspring of the strength of every race lies in its spirituality, and the race begins to

decline in vitality the day that spirituality wanes and secularism and materialism gain ground.

The great central truth in every religion is to evolve a God out of man. As Swami Vivekananda has said, 'What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true what else could matter? *If it is not true what do our lives matter?*' Spiritual strength born out of Self-knowledge, is the one thing that can destroy all weakness and fear *for ever*. So, that strength which tends to make us spiritually sound and whole is the highest; next to it comes moral strength and after that comes intellectual strength; and then comes physical strength, which, as we all know is the least dependable.

## THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Swami Vivekananda belongs to the class of great seers of Truth. His intellect was great, but greater still was his heart. He once told his disciples at the Belur Math that if a conflict were to arise between the intellect and the heart they should reject the intellect and follow the heart. Many a Mahatma has appeared in this land, and some of them understood that to meditate on the soul in the caves of the Himalayas was the correct path to follow. Swami Vivekananda's mind also was influenced by this tradition and there arose a conflict in him early in his career; his intellect advocating the traditional absorption in Self-realization and his heart bleeding for the miseries of the people around him. In the end he came to the conclusion that leaving the solitude he would enter into the soul of every being and worship his God by serving them.

And what attracts the poor and lowly to him is this compassionate heart which ever bled for them and exhausted itself in their incessant service in thirty-nine brief years. It was in the anguish of that heart that he cried out, in his memorable message at Madras, in 1897:

'Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it made you almost mad?'

It was this measureless feeling for the spiritual and material poverty and misery of his



fellow men, particularly of his fellow countrymen, that drove him round the world like a tornado of moral energy and gave him no rest till the end. His life's campaigns in the East and the West, including the founding of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, were in response to this feeling. His life was all purity and love; his coming to and going from this world was quick, sudden. But in the short period of thirty-nine years he accomplished so much by way of stirring up and infusing new life and new hope into the people that in the history of our great country we do not find a second to stand equal to him in this except perhaps the great Shankaracharya.

Today we are building a new India, in our own way. It is now that we need Swamiji's power and presence. Of course Swamiji is not physically with us; but his words are there; his teachings are there. They are before us. In our country there is ignorance; there is poverty. Swamiji gave us a *mantra* in keeping with the cultural and spiritual heritage of our nation. He cut a new path, a new *dharma*, a religion of tolerance, universal brotherhood, and equality of mankind. We have experienced various revolutions in our country; but we have always preserved the soul of our culture in the midst of those cataclysmic changes. We cannot go forward, we cannot be a progressive nation by forsaking that soul of our civilization and culture. It may be that a gifted few can walk in the right path all alone, but for the rest it is necessary that they draw their inspiration from our ancient culture. Swamiji tried to do this. There were many weakening influences in our country during Swamiji's time. He wanted these to be removed and replaced by the national dynamic culture. His message was therefore to make ourselves nurtured and nourished by this culture which would lead the nation to power and strength.

We want to build the nation. How shall we do it is the problem. It is my conviction that we cannot progress unless and until there comes about a Dharmic regeneration in our country; we need the ministrations of a

*dharma* which accepts every other *dharma*, and this Vivekananda gave us in the great Vedanta. No doubt, Vedanta is not new to our country. But we had no means to find access to it; we could not make use of it; we could not practise it. We need the love and practicality of Buddha and the philosophy of Vedanta. In one of his Madras lectures, Swamiji said that he would give a message which would be useful not only to his own nation but also to the nations outside. To make his teachings effective and to make them spread among the people, just as Buddha started his organization of monks, so also Swamiji brought into existence the great Ramakrishna Mission. It is a matter of pride, it is a matter of joy, that his aims and objects are being realized and his vision is being fulfilled through the work of the centres of the Mission through all of which the Vedanta reaches to the people in various forms to help the poor, to educate the ignorant, and to lift up the depressed.

The greatest problem in our country is its divergent sects, its divergent castes and creeds. Can we compose these differences? Can we go forward and gather strength? Vivekananda strongly criticized caste distinctions. He said this was the cause for much of our social weakness. Social unity was broken long ago, causing a tragedy of a thousand years! Swamiji spoke scathingly about the prevailing conceptions of religion—of religion entering the kitchen and the cooking-pots, of the religion of 'don't-touchism'. He declared unequivocally that so long as we are caught in this '*dharma*', we shall remain far from the *real dharma* which preaches human unity. People should unite; but there is everything to keep us disunited. A Brahmin is engaged in Brahmanvidyā. And if his son takes to business or any other activity, he is still reckoned as a Brahmin just because he is born of a Brahmin.

If we want to progress, we should understand the truth of *dharma* and follow it up. Quality should be the criterion of greatness or Brahminhood and not mere birth.



The aim of our *dharma* is that even a *mleccha* can be led up to the highest. Based on this fundamental idea of Vedanta, Swamiji discouraged the 'kitchen religion' and proclaimed that there is no difference between man and man. The difference seen is only in manifestation and not in the potential divinity. All could be brought up to the highest, all could become the greatest. Our weakness, our ignorance, can be driven away with this tonic. Can we build a society, a civilization on this great ideal of Vedanta? I believe that we shall succeed if we try earnestly. If this ideal is broadcast in our country, Which Hindu will refuse to accept it? Which foreigner will fail to respond to this call to his own innate divinity? We should realize that our differences, cultural, social, and political, resulting from this caste and other distinctions, can be composed only by this Vedantic teaching of Swami Vivekananda. By the same teaching we can solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. The question of poverty can be dealt with on the same footing. When our dream is to build a happy society, there should not be a few rich and many poor. Swamiji sought a solution for this economic inequality also fifty years ago. In one of his epistles he writes: 'I am a socialist'. The unity and equality he found in *Brahmavidya* he wanted to establish in the field of national economy and in the field of society. Today the Rajas, Zamindars, and the rich look down upon the labouring class. This is the opposite of what Swamiji taught. He said, 'They are one with you. The same divinity shines through them and you'. What unity of existence he saw in Advaita Vedanta, what equality he experienced in the human personality, the same he wanted to bring into the fields of economics and society too. He

saw the hungry and the naked about him; and he felt that until they were fed and clothed no *dharma* could be preached to them; without the welfare of the masses no *dharma* could be firmly established. So today our hearts bow to Swamiji. I am a student of Swamiji. I am not worthy to talk about him. But this is what I see in him, what I learn from him. He went beyond and wanted to take us also beyond. He sees our weakness not with the eye of contempt, but with that of compassion, with a passion to serve, with a feeling of agony at our fallen condition. In that same epistle he writes about his advocacy of socialism not as a perfect foolproof system but that 'half a loaf is better than none'.

I consider Swami Vivekananda a leader in every respect,—in religion, culture, economics, sociology,—all of which ought to be established on the bed-rock of Vedanta, our ancient rational philosophy. If we fail to remember this and to build our nation on the foundations of our historic legacy, then India will not remain India. We shall, through the help of the Ramakrishna Mission and by our own efforts, inspired by the Message of the great Swamiji, have to try earnestly to realize a fuller and a richer life for ourselves individually and for the vast mass of our countrymen. Our progress does not stop with our own realization, but must flow into a struggle to bring the fullness of freedom to others. All of us should understand this aspect of Swami Vivekananda's teachings, and should not exclude from the purview of religion the consideration and solution of the pressing problems of our village, of our country, and of our brothers and sisters. A solution for these can be successfully achieved if we live and act up to the Message of Swami Vivekananda.

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'It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

BY DR. RADHA GOVINDA BASAK

We are indeed passing, all over the world, through most troublous and fearful times when our very culture and civilization seem to be at stake. A most devastating world war has only formally been over just seven years ago. Its all-devouring nature has, as it were, engulfed all the moral force that was prevalent on earth before its commencement. We are facing a moral crisis and eagerly expecting a new stream of moral force to flow not only in our social life but also in our political and spiritual. The leaders of thought in the modern world are anxious to see the end of the play of passion, anger, hatred, violence, malice, hostility, distrust, and suspicion which divide the nations in different countries, and they pray for the reappearance of peace, love, friendship, and service among human societies. We often feel shuddered to hear of the 'cold' war that is in progress and live in utter fear lest a major conflict in the shape of a more horrible third 'hot' war should break out for the annihilation of the human race. Only the observance of right and good, and suppression of wrong and evil, can help us in achieving a peaceful and tranquil life in society and for this we need cultivate amity, friendship, compassion, love, devotion, service to fellow men, and such other higher human sentiments and qualities, which have been so eloquently spoken of in Buddhism.

Gautama Buddha was Universal Love and Perfect Wisdom personified. His was a dynamic personality. His reason in analysing all human venture in search for the ultimate Truth and his skill of wisdom in understanding the workings of human mind were unique. A discussion, though short, of the life and teachings of such a great person—a veritable *avatara* or a prophet, as we say—may bring about a sense of solace to

our distressed mind. I have intentionally avoided raising here the complicated questions of Buddhist philosophy, for, I feel that whatever truths the great teachers preached in a simple way before the people of their own times for the uplift of their moral and spiritual life and for the achievement of their ultimate salvation, were often interpreted, after their demise, by their immediate disciples and their later line of successors, by reading into them many a philosophical trend of thoughts and they thus brought about complexities of thought which kept away from human vision the general and simple teachings which are quite potent in themselves to create tranquillity and peace, and to make it easy for humanity to taste the happiness of emancipation or *nirvāṇa*.

The invocation of the Buddha as is found in the *Lalita Vistara* written in the *gāthā* language, in the famous verse, runs as follows:

*Cināture jīvaloke kleśavyādhiprapīḍite,  
Vaidyarāt tvam samutpannah sarva-  
vyādhipramocakah.*

'(O Buddha!) the human world has long been sick and it has suffered from the disease of passions and torments,—but you have appeared (on earth) as the supreme physician to heal all these diseases'.

We intend here to discuss the mode of treatment which this great physician—the son of Shuddhodana and Māyādevī, Gautama Buddha, born about 2514-15 years ago in the Lumbini village of Kapilavastu in the noble and kingly Shākyan country—successfully adopted to cure the ills of the people of his times and make them free from the various shackles of their earthly life. The Brahminic Upanishads held the view that only those persons who are fortunately guided by great teachers can know the truth or the ultimate



Reality (*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*); and the Buddha was one such teacher, who, with his searching mental eye, discovered a system of spiritual training, and preached the same for people's knowledge and for the good and welfare of humanity at large.

A brief reference to Buddha's contemporaneous religious sects in India will not be out of place here as it may help us to understand the particular spiritual atmosphere in which the Buddha found himself enveloped. Generally speaking, the chief religious and philosophical system that prevailed in pre-Buddhistic age was that of the Upanishads. In that system emphasis was laid more on knowledge (*jñāna*) than on works (*karma*). In Buddha's time also the influence of priesthood and Vedic ritualistic institutions (*karma-kāṇḍa*) did not fully cease to work on the people's mind, though the first impact on them by the Upanishads commenced to be felt somewhat earlier. This impact, however, began to be asserted on the people's mind when the Buddha preached his first sermon (*dharmacakra pravartana*) at Sarnath after his attainment of perfect knowledge (*sambodhi*) at his thirty-fifth year. But in this hostility against the Brahmanic cult of ritualistic Karma, the Ājivaka, the Jaina, and the Lokāyata schools of Buddha's time also joined their hands to some extent. The founder of the Ājivaka sect, which believed in the doctrine of *niyati* (predestination or fate)—according to which all phenomena, physical or mental, are unalterably fixed and which cherished no faith in *puruṣakāra* (human efforts or exertions) was Goshāla Mankhaliputra. The founder of the Jaina sect which accepted harmlessness or abstinence from giving pain to others in thought, word, or deed, as its chief tenet, was the great ascetic Mahāvira, the Nirgranthanāthaputra. The third chief leader of philosophical thought of Buddha's time was Keshakambalin, a materialist and unbeliever in soul or God, and probably inclined to the tenets of the Lokayatas who had not even a scanty leaning towards the Vedic lores and indulged in the common view 'Eat, drink, and be merry'.

There were three other prominent names of religious leaders of Buddha's time. A Brahmin preacher of the name of Sanjaya was the teacher of the two most famous and devoted disciples of Buddha, viz. Sāriputra and Maudgalāyana, before their ordination to Buddhism. This Sanjaya was rather a sceptic and he cherished doubt in the solution of the philosophical problems, e.g. whether the world is permanent or impermanent, whether there is continuity of life or self after a man's death, whether the world has its beginning or it is beginningless, etc. He was ever against supporting the arguments (assumed as false by him) in the so-called decision regarding these enigmatic problems. The name of the second Brahminic leader was Purna-Kāshyapa and this name Purna was justified because of his claim to all-knowingness. He conquered the feeling of shame and so always remained nude. The third teacher's name was Kakuda-Kātyāyana. This contemporary of Buddha believed that the origination, preservation, and dissolution of the universe depended on the four (not the usual five) elements—earth, water, fire, and air, and on the other three things, viz. pleasure, pain, and the individual self, i.e. altogether on these seven principles. To Gautama Buddha, all the various sectarian tenets and doctrines referred to above, appeared quite unsatisfactory and also unappealing to his own mind.

Here a brief reference may be made to some of the special features in the life's events of the Buddha and the doctrines of the *saddharma* (Buddhism) as propounded, preached, and taught by him. It should be remembered that to be a believer in this Dharma of Buddha one need not be a Brahmin, or a high or a rich person alone. In the matter of religious observances and performances there can be no distinction between a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin, high or low, rich or poor. Two *gāthās* of the *Dhammapada* (Brāhmaṇa-varga, 11-12) bear recital in this connection:

*Na jaṭāñi na gottena na jaccā hoti  
brāhmaṇo,*



*Yamhi saccañca dhammo ca so suci so ca  
brāhmaṇo.*

*Kim te jaṭāhi dummedha kim te ajina-  
sātiyā ?*

*Abbhantaram te gahaṇām bāhiraṃ pari-  
majjasi.*

'A man cannot be a Brahmin by his platted hair, by his family, or by his birth (alone). He is (regarded as) pure and he is a Brahmin, in whom reside truth and righteousness. O fool! of what use is thy platted hair and what does thy garment of a black antelope's skin avail? Thy interior (mind) is an abyss (of impurities), but thou cleanse thy exterior (outer form) only'.

However, after the birth of Gautama, the Rishis headed by Asita and other Brahminic astrologers prophesied to his father Shuddhodana that his newly-born son may in future become a supreme sovereign or a Buddha (i.e. the Enlightened One) and in the latter event he may have to renounce the world and become homeless (*anagārikā*). As the boy was growing into age, his father's determination to guard against this last eventuality (of his son's renunciation by becoming a mendicant or monk, a *śramaṇa*) began to grow also. So he arranged to keep the son attached to worldly pleasures and strove his utmost to ward off all sights from his son's eyes, that might cause mental disgust and despondency, rather self-disparagement. The father gave his son in marriage with an exquisitely beautiful royal princess, Yashodharā by name, at the commencement of his youth and Gautama begot a son who was named Rāhula.

Renunciation came to Gautama in the same manner as it does to all supermen and Avatāras (incarnations). When, in his twenty-ninth year, the young Gautama could not bear the poignant pain arising from the three kinds of human miseries—those which come from the self (*ādhyātmika*), those from the gods (*ādhidaivika*), and those from the elements (*ādhibhautika*), he renounced the world in search of that agency or way by which human sufferings can be put an end to

and for the attainment of eternal bliss. He thought that it was not possible for any one to lead a completely pure or holy life by residing at home. He, therefore, made his determination stronger to adopt the life of a mendicant by leaving his home and thus pave the way to extirpate all worldly miseries by resorting to meditation and contemplation, easy to be attained in lonely forest-life. Father Shuddhodana, on hearing of his son's resolve, felt thunder-struck, and he hurried to send a request to Gautama through his ministers to defer renunciation at least during his (father's) lifetime. There came the son's reply that he would accede to this request of his father and postpone his renunciation if he (the father) could stand surety for four things. These four things have been mentioned in a famous *gāthā*-verse in the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* which reads thus:

*Yauvane vartamānasmim jarā me mā  
khu āgame,*

*Ārogye vartamānasmim vyādhi me mā  
khu āgame.*

*Jivite vartamānasmim maraṇam me mā  
khu āgame,*

*Sampattisu ramiyāsu vipatti me mā khn  
āgame.*

i.e. Gautama wanted assurance from his father that no decrepitude or old age will attack him, but perpetual youth will prevail instead; that no disease will befall him, but permanent good health will remain; that no death will occur to him, but this life will continuously proceed; and that no adversity will disturb him, but pleasure-giving prosperity will flow on. His father's natural reply was that no man was immune from the assaults of decrepitude, disease, death, and adversity in life. So stiffer became Gautama's final resolve to strive for the attainment of that object (*nirvāṇa*) which is permanent, blissful, and holy. The father, on the other hand, surrounded him with all sorts of worldly pleasures such as dancing and music performed by beautiful damsels brought into the palace. But the son began to find fault with these scenes which appeared loathsome to his mind.



Meanwhile the three visions of an old man, a sick man, and a dead man touched his heart very sorrowfully, but the fourth vision of a serene and tranquil-minded holy ascetic (*śramaṇa*) clad in his yellow garment, impressed him with the idea that it was such a person alone who could rise superior to all the ills of the world and become worthy of attainment of the highest beatitude. He thought, moreover, that the three fires of attachment, hatred, and delusion must have to be extinguished before one could realize and enjoy the bliss of emancipation or *nirvāṇa*. He, therefore, resolved to forsake his home on the very *Puṣyā-nakṣatra* day on which his father wanted him to be anointed as the crown prince. When his father brought to Gautama the happy news of the birth of a son to his wife, Yashodhara, he exclaimed saying, 'Rahula is born—the chain of bondage is strengthened'. Before renunciation, he at first thought of having a last sight and touch of his newly-born son, but having entered the sleeping-chamber of his wife, he stopped doing so, lest his wife should awake and create impediment in the way of his resolve to leave the world, and so he silently left his paternal home. That man can never give up his resolve to follow the path of resignation (*nivṛtti*) once his mind is seriously bent on shunning the course of worldly activities (*pravṛtti*). On finding Gautama renouncing the world, Māra (the Tempter or the Evil One), who is the embodiment of all hankerings and cravings, attained a sad plight and his realm became gloomy, as it were.

After having left home at the age of twenty-nine, Gautama (the *Bodhisattva*) wandered in many a place and performed the severest kinds of penances—without food or sleep, and in the trying hot and cold seasons of the year, with rains and thunder overhead—and in the course of these austerities his body reached the stage of extreme emaciation; but having passed such a hard life for six years, he could not realize the desired state of enlightenment which he was seeking so ardently. He then felt that self-mortification was not the way to

achieve the perfect state of Knowledge; and he, therefore, re-entered his former mode of life as a mendicant. In this predicament he proceeded to the bank of the Nairanjanā river under the pipal tree at (present-day) Bodh-Gaya, thenceforth called the Bodhi-druma,—the tree of enlightenment, and took his seat there, firmly declaring that 'he should not leave it before he succeeded in attaining perfect knowledge, although his skin, bones, and flesh wasted away and his body dried up'. He remained absolutely steadfast and immovable in that position, never being daunted by the onslaught of Mara, the Tempter, and his army of workers who tried their level best to deflect the Bodhisattva from his purpose. But Mara was vanquished and victory was won by Gautama (who is, therefore, called *Māra-vijayi*, the defeater of the Tempter). Gautama became *sambuddha* (perfectly enlightened) during a night-time. It is said in Pāli works that in the first watch of that particular night he obtained the knowledge of his own previous existences; in the second, of all the present states of beings; in the third, of the chain of causes and effects; and at the dawn of day, he came to know of all things, i.e. he became omniscient.

The Buddhists of India believe that after having attained *sambodhi*, the Bodhisattva gave forth a joyful utterance (*udāna*), which finds its place in the *Jarā-varga* of the *Dhammapada* (*gāthās* 8-9) in the following words:

*Anekajātisamsāram sandhāvissam anibbisaṃ,*

*Gahakārakam gavesanto dukkhā jāti punappunam.*

*Gahakāraka ! ditṭho'si puna geham na kāhasi,*

*Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā gahakūṭam visaṅkhatam,*

*Visaṅkhāragatam cittam taṇhānam khaya-majjhagā.*

'Looking for the builder of this tabernacle (i.e. this my body, the prison-house of the senses) I should have to traverse a cycle of many births, but without (probably) succeed-



ing to find him (out);—but painful it is to go through births again and again. But now, O you maker of the tabernacle! you have been found out (by me) and you will not (be able to) build this tabernacle again. All your rafters are broken and your ridge-pole is sundered. (My) mind being free from predispositions (i.e. approaching the Eternal, *nirvāṇa*) has attained the extinction of all desires'.

Metaphorically speaking, we may, therefore, regard this destruction of all cravings and desires as victory over the Tempter. It is Desire which leads to the building of the body, binding it to the wheel of existences. Once desires are dead in us, we become free from future births. It is after his victory over Mara or the Tempter that Gautama assumed for himself the favourite name of Tathāgata, which is interpreted in one way, by the Buddhists, as the person who has attained *tathā* or the real cause of our existences.

The Buddhists, like the followers of the other Indian Brahminic systems of philosophy, believed in the doctrine of pain (*duḥkḥavāda*). They had also firm faith in the doctrine of works (*karmavāda*) according to which humanity bears the consequences of good or evil acts in life and shapes future existences. They also had firm belief in the doctrine of rebirths (*janmāntaravāda*). The Ego, or the *pudgala* as the Buddhists call it, i.e. the individual being, is always subject to feeling pleasure and pain in accordance with the good or evil deeds done by him. But it is indeed very difficult to be above the antithetical pair of virtue and vice. Human beings always strive for attaining to the state of happiness and tranquillity by being released from the hard fetters of birth, age, disease, and death. They seek for the path of deliverance from the hands of *samsāra*, revolution or cycle of repeated existences. Different systems of philosophy came into being in the course of the teachers' attempt to discover and determine the ways by which the cause of pain in the world can be ascertained and extinguished

and men can succeed in ending their rebirths. Complete and everlasting extinction of sufferings and miseries of the world is the aim of all Indian philosophers. The Brahmvādins (or the Vedantists) acknowledge the existence of only one entity (the Brahman) and they own that the knowledge of that absolute Soul or Self leads to *mukti* or release from the bondage of births and rebirths. The materialist philosophers, the Lokayatikas, once referred to above, believed that the universe is *akāraṇa-sambhūta*, i.e. never born of any super-cause. The followers of the Pātañjala system again regard everything as being ordained by God, the highest cause. But Gautama Buddha seems to have considered such views of the different schools of philosophical thought as extremely unhelpful in bringing about liberation, rather they lead to greater distress and bondage. The Buddhists really believe that if the egos or individual beings can achieve cessation of all miseries, they will be able to attain tranquillity and eventually the immortal state of *nirvāṇa* by extinguishing themselves like fire or a lamp. Their earthly existence becomes extinct and attains the state of *śūnya* (absolute non-existence). So they think that there is, in a way, no individual, no universe, and no cause of them both. But we also find in Buddhist canons this *nirvāṇa* being called as *a-kata* (*akṛta*)—‘the uncreated’, and *a-mata* (*amṛta*)—‘the immortal’, i.e. it is neither created, nor does it ever die. Hence it may be presumed that it is a *siddha-vastu* or eternally existing thing, and hence it may be equated with the Brahminic idea of the Brahman.

Let us now form an idea of what was the nature of the chain of causes and effects (technically called the *pratītya-samutpāda*, i.e. the law of happening by way of a cause, or, the law of origination of a thing or phenomenon depending on another as its cause)—which the Bodhisattva revolved within his mind during the third watch of the night on which he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Gaya. The basic principle in



this law of *Paṭicca-samupphāda* (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is laid down in the following formulary, viz.:

*Imasmim sati, idam hoti; imassupphādā idam uppajjati;*

*Imasmim asati, idam na hoti; imassa nirodhā idam nisajjati.*

'This having been, that comes to be; from the appearance of this, that arises. This having not been, that does not come into existence; from the cessation of this, that ceases to be'.

Through his eye of knowledge Gautama, during his enlightenment, observed that the twelve *nidāna(s)*, (*hetu(s)*, *samudaya(s)*, or *paccaya(s)* as they are also called by the Buddhists) are the following, and they are arranged, as it were, to form as links in a chain of dependent origination. He grasped the idea that (1) *dukkha*, human pain or sorrow (i.e. due to decay, death, etc.) is causally determined by *jāti* (birth); (2) *jāti* by *bhava* (action, good or bad); (3) *bhava* by *upādāna* (clinging to existence); (4) *upādāna* by *trṣṇā* (desire or craving for worldly objects); (5) *trṣṇā* by *vedanā* (feeling or sensation of pleasure and pain); (6) *vedanā* by *sparsa* (touch or contact); (7) *sparsa* by *ṣaḍāyatana* (the six organs of sense); (8) *ṣaḍāyatana* by *nāma-rūpa* (name and form, i.e. individual being; according to some, mind and body); (9) *nāma-rūpa* by *viññāna* (consciousness); (10) *viññāna* by *samskāra* (conformations left from actions in former births), and (11) *samskāra* by (12) *avidyā* (ignorance).

By the cessation of the preceding one amongst these *nidāna(s)* the following one ceases to be. Hence ignorance becomes responsible ultimately for all human sorrows.

In this connection we should refer to the four noble truths—*ārya-satya(s)*—which the Bodhisattva realized during his enlightenment, viz. (1) the existence of pain as an entity, (2) the origin of pain, (3) the cessation of pain, and (4) the eightfold path (*aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) that leads to the cessation of pain. The Buddha described this eightfold path as the *majjhima-paṭipadā* (*madhyama-pratipadā*), the

middle course, which, according to him, creates true insight and intelligence and which leads to tranquillity of mind (*upaśama*), intuitive knowledge or supernatural faculty (*abhijñā*), supreme wisdom (*sambodha*) and eternal happiness (*nirvāṇa*). When the Buddha delivered his first sermon (*dharmacakra-pravartana*, i.e. setting in motion the wheel of the Law, as they say) at the Deer-Park (*mṛgadāva*) at Isipatana (Sarnath, near Banaras) before the five rebelling comrades of his, he exhorted them to shun the two extremes in life's conduct, viz. (1) the pursuit of worldly and sensual pleasures on the one hand, and (2) the practice of useless and worthless austerities or self-mortification on the other, and adopt the eightfold middle path which he himself discovered. We should all do well to remember these eight principles, viz. (1) *sammā-diṭṭhi* (*samyag-dṛṣṭi*), i.e. right view or belief; (2) *sammā-saṅkappa* (*samyak-saṅkalpa*), right resolve or aspiration; (3) *sammā-vācā* (*samyag-vācā*), right speech; (4) *sammā-kammanta* (*samyak-karmānta*) right work or action; (5) *sammā-ājīva* (*samyag-ājīva*), right living or profession; (6) *sammā-vāyāma* (*samyag-vyāyāma*), right endeavour; (7) *sammā sati* (*samyak-smṛti*), right thought or recollection; and (8) *sammā-samādhi* (*samyak-samādhi*), right meditation or self-concentration. In that famous discourse at Sarnath, the Buddha further explained clearly the nature of pain, its origin, and its cessation. The first noble truth, pain, is thus defined by him: birth is a pain, decay is a pain, disease is a pain, and death is a pain. It is a pain to be associated with an unpleasant object and it is again a pain to be alienated from a pleasant object. It is also a pain to fail to get a thing that a person wants to possess. In short, it is a pain to cling to the five elements, *pañcopādāna-skandha(s)*, of which a man's body-cum-spirit state of being consists, viz. *rūpa* (corporeal form), *vedanā* (sensations), *saiñā* (perceptions), *samskāra* (conformations or predispositions), and *viññāna* (consciousness). The second noble truth is the origination of pain, and it is thus defined: *Taṇhā*



(desire or thirst or craving for worldly objects, i.e. *kāmanā*) which is mostly the cause of pain, leads to new births; and being accompanied by pleasure and lust, it sometimes finds its delight here and there. This desire may be of three kinds: *kāma-trṣṇā* (the thirst for pleasure), *bhava-trṣṇā* (the thirst for being or existence), and *vibhava-trṣṇā* (the thirst for prosperity and power). The third noble truth, the cessation of pain, is thus defined: Desire is to be eliminated or destroyed completely so as to leave no trace of it; it is to be abandoned and done away with; and one should seek

deliverance from it, and it should not be given any quarter at any moment in the mind. The fourth noble truth, the eightfold path, has just been dealt with above. Acceptance and true following of this path will surely lead to the release of all men from the twelvefold fetters of cause and effect (called *pratītya-samutpāda* or the chain of causation, as it is also called), save them from the ills of life, viz. birth, decay, disease, death, and rebirth, and bring about their ultimate emancipation (*nirvāṇa*).

(To be continued)

## RELIGION OF MAN

BY JAGDISH SAHAI

Modern man is so self-conceited that he considers it sheer waste of time to pause and think what he is, what this universe (of which he is just a part) is, and what relation he has with the Creator of this universe? These are all fundamental questions. So long as man refuses to think accurately over these things he cannot build a safe, strong, and sure edifice for his thoughts that can give him a clear perception of the goal towards which he must move. Because of this lack of understanding over the fundamentals of life itself, man has created more problems for himself than he has solved. Never was there such longing for world peace as today. In spite of the achievements in the scientific and other fields of human knowledge, man has failed to preserve his own dignity and integrity. Man's 'inhumanity' towards man still makes countless thousands miserable. It must be brought home to man that he is essentially a spiritual being and that a society based on a materialistic conception of the universe is, like an inverted cone, in unstable equilibrium. Spiritual values alone give meaning and purpose to human life.

Man's life should be viewed as a whole. It is wrong to divide it into different compartments such as religious, social, political, and economic, as if each compartment is independent of the other. It is often said that religion is a personal matter between man and his Maker. And it is also said that a secular State has nothing to do with religion. Both these views are fallacious. Religion is not purely a 'private' affair. One is just on the path of religion when one begins to act in an impersonal way. Religion is and always shall be a vital fact in man's life. A secular State will not be a truly welfare State if its energies are not directed towards the raising of the spiritual solidarity and the moral tone of the people it governs. The destiny of nations has ever centred round the character of individual men and women. Demoralization and degradation of character have preceded disintegration of every civilization. A student of history knows that all the wealth and power of Western civilization did not save degenerate Rome. Character is the essence of Religion.



### ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

What is man's religion? In answer to this question we find numerous faiths and philosophies prevalent in the different communities of mankind. Just as Nature everywhere is one, but there is diversity in it, even so Humanity throughout the world is one, although every man differs from the others both in thought and conduct. In spite of this obvious diversity, we find that it is a common but powerful desire of man to conform to a particular mode of behaviour in the world. Incarnations, saints, prophets, seers, and sages have appeared in different parts of the world from time to time in order to teach men how to behave in harmony with the underlying spirit of the cosmos. These great souls, on the basis of personal experience, expounded the essential ideals and values in life and taught how they can be achieved. Their spiritual thoughts and teachings form the subject-matter of the scriptures and philosophies of the different faiths. In addition to their moral and spiritual teachings, almost all the religious teachers and reformers of the world gave out a plan and a system of their own on which human society would best be organized. It was thus that every faith helped to establish customs and conventions, with rites and rituals, amongst the communities of mankind and gave birth to a particular type of civilization and culture which naturally differed from the others.

Although everyone, after studying the scriptures of the various faiths, can find out for oneself the essential unity underlying them all, the differences in their respective customs and conventions also become equally patent and obvious. For this reason, we often find that the followers of one faith harbour feelings of hatred towards those of other faiths. Every man considers his own religion to be not only right but superior to those of others. If a man, leaving aside the differences due to customs and conventions, were to try to grasp and live up to those spiritual truths that are essential to him for reaching

the ultimate goal which is common to all humanity, he is bound to love and extend full tolerance towards the followers of other faiths. Every religion, no matter of whatever label, can take man to this common goal. Therefore, all those who fight in the name of religion, do not, in fact, understand what religion is. They stultify themselves by becoming victims of their own selfish, sectarian, and bigoted thoughts and actions. Man should ever remember that he is a member of the human family first and foremost and thereafter a follower of this or that religion. Religion is the way of life that leads man to his ultimate goal. Since there is uniformity in the spiritual teachings of all religions, it is up to man to act in accordance with them in his life. Human life is replete with experiences—both good and bad—which go to make up man's fund of knowledge. Religion too is a matter of experience, resulting in the consciousness of the Highest Truth in which all that exists finds its ultimate refuge.

### THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

If one probes into the ultimate Truth one will find that the essential teachings of all religions are the same, though they have been expressed in different words. This Truth is the true Religion of Man. Its foundations have been laid on the following three fundamental principles:

(1) Be good and do good—this will make for Character.

(2) Develop non-attachment and unselfishness—this will make for Personality. An integral personality has to be built up on the sound foundation of self-sacrifice.

(3) To acquire Supreme Knowledge is man's highest privilege; in fact, it is his ultimate goal. This will give him Freedom; it will make him one with the all-informing universal Spirit, also called 'God'.

To acquire such knowledge is to develop that consciousness in man which alone can give him a complete answer to the whys and



wherefores of life on earth, viz. why a man takes birth and what is his ultimate goal? This will also solve for man the mystery of God and creation.

The above principles can be briefly amplified as under:

'To work you have a right but not to the fruit thereof', because you have no control over the latter. Man is free to act; he can act as he likes, but the fruit of his actions is not in his hands or within his power. Actions of one individual react on the actions of other individuals and *vice versa*. The inevitable effect of action and reaction is always there and willy-nilly we are mutually affected by it. Man's actions do not cease to be effective till they have borne fruit. No power of Nature can stop an action from bearing its fruit. There are some actions which bear fruit instantaneously. If the hand is put into the fire it will get burnt. There are other actions which bear fruit after a period of time has elapsed. When a man takes physical exercise its fruit will result after some time. Even so it is possible that we may not get the fruit of many of our actions in our present life and have to reap them in our next life. Just as the wind, on its onward march from one place to another, takes with it the resultant of both sweet and bad odours through which it has passed, in the same manner a man's ego, at the time of death, leaves the physical body, taking with it the final outcome of his thoughts, actions, experiences, and will, acquired during the life that has just ended, and enters another body and starts on a new chapter of life's journey with the former life's character-load as the starting-point.

#### THE WAY TO RIGHT ACTION

Man and his action are inseparable. Man must work in order to live. But how? A man should work without any selfish motive. He should be as selfless in his conduct as possible. This will help him in developing non-attachment. Selfless work is that which a man does without any motive of selfish and

personal profit. All actions which go to gratify the 'I-ness' or the finite individuality of man are doubtless selfish. When man is deluded by the selfish thoughts of 'I' and 'mine', he becomes a slave to lust, anger, and greed which impel him to commit the meanest of actions. The thought of depriving others of all wealth and power and bringing them under his possession will dominate his whole life. But selfless service connotes impersonal action. In doing such impersonal action man sees his own good in the good of others. By working in this spirit he identifies himself with all other beings of the universe and does not consider the reality of their existence apart from himself. On the other hand, he feels that like all other beings he too is a part and parcel of the universe as a whole. Therefore, whatever action contributes to the good of the whole becomes a right action for him. Every action of his is done for the good of the whole and not for his personal individual self.

#### WHO IS THE DOER OF ACTION?

Man being the essential part of Nature, works according to the nature within him. The soul of man, embodied in a human form, apparently limited by the initial character-load and the chain of individual experiences ordained by the Law of Karma (or the law of Cosmic Moral Order which affirms 'as man sows so he reaps'), strives to realize, during the course of several lives, the real state of its oneness with the Pure Soul. Man's nature no doubt influences his body and mind in accordance with the character-load with which he starts on his life's journey. But his mind is endowed with such wonderful powers of discrimination and dispassion that through his own strong will he can subdue his lower nature and refuse to allow the mind to become its slave. Man is divine and is not confined to his body and mind alone. He partakes of the Infinite. Religion embraces the whole of life which it consecrates and realizes as a revelation of the divinity in man. It is the



form and substance of the highest type of life of which man is capable.

### DUTY AND SERVICE

It is through action that man reveals his true self. All action is duty, for it must be performed. But one ought not to do any work under a sense of compulsion. All work should be done with the conviction that it will do good to the whole of humanity. Let duties be sweetened with all-embracing love. One should be earnest in whatever one does and should not give any place to self-interest. Man should work for work's sake. This will make him unselfish. An action which is done under a sense of compulsion is devoid of free will, and a certain sense of pain results from its performance. Whatever duties a man is privileged to perform by virtue of his position in the scheme of life he should render them intelligently and diligently. Duties performed in a spirit of devotional love and service give man a wonderful experience of bliss which keeps him always cheerful. Performance of action in this manner is the most effective means of rendering real service to mankind.

### SELF-ABNEGATION IN SERVICE.

Gradually an individual should widen his circle of service till he serves humanity. He should not expect any return for his service, for, service of fellow beings is service of one's own self. This is true sacrifice. A person should ever enhance the limits of his service according to capacity. First comes the service of one's parents and those who are nearest to oneself; then of one's family and friends; then of fellow citizens and the community and the country, and ultimately of all mankind irrespective of any divisions. In rendering service, a person should always be particular to see that he is not doing it for the sake of mere name and fame or in expectation of any return. 'Do good and forget it with its performance'. This principle will make selfless service possible. When man begins to see his own good in the good of

others, performance of selfless service becomes the prime duty of everyone. In the very act of serving others man forgets his little self. This is true self-sacrifice.

### WHAT IS SELF?

Mistaking the body for the Self lies at the root of all misery from which humanity has so far been suffering. This is responsible for creating insatiable desires in man, which breed dissensions, distrust, enmity, and all the evils and troubles that man is heir to in both his individual and corporate capacities. As fire cannot be quenched by pouring oil over it, which will make it burn all the more fiercely, the sensuous desires of the flesh only increase all the more by being gratified through self-indulgence. This is not the path of happiness. It brings only pain and misery. Happiness, bliss, and peace are attainable through spiritual realization, sublimation of desires, and the annihilation of that delusion which presents the gross body as the Self. He who can merge his conditioned and limited self into the all-pervading universal Self is truly happy in this world. Such a man alone can be the friend of all, the servant of all. None can set a limit to one's love for humanity except one's own pet sympathies and narrow predispositions. The highest catholicity and the utmost capacity for selfless service can exist side by side in the same individual. A society also can be constructed on such lines, for society is but an aggregate of individuals.

A man's interest can never be confined to the body alone. His Self, in fact, comprehends the whole universe as one with himself, because there is no meaning in considering man's existence apart from the cosmos as a whole. When he detaches his individual self from bodily attachments, he will comprehend the 'whole'. To comprehend the 'whole' is to love one and all without distinction. In other words, it is to realize oneself in the 'whole' and the 'whole' in oneself. Truly, the word 'I' connotes not the individual little self but the omnipresent Soul or Self. The Self or Soul is one and the same in every



being; so the 'I' cannot be more than one. Hence the individual soul is not apart from the real Self.

#### THE IDEAL OF TRUE LOVE

To realize this Self one must love all. Selfless love, with infinite sympathy, will overcome all objective and physical limitations. For, love is the unifying force which binds not only man to man but also man to the universe and to his Maker. The love of a nurse-maid towards another's child she is in charge of is of the unattached and unselfish kind. She feeds the child, loves it, plays with it, and is all kind towards it as if it is her own child. But, on being dismissed from service, she leaves the child, gives up all attachment to it, and is ever willing to take service elsewhere and nurse another child. Similarly should one in the world behave in respect of all the things which one considers one's own and feels called upon to love and serve. Even as the nurse-maid looks after another's child in a spirit of non-attachment, keeps it safe and sound under her custody as a trust, and serves it with all the love she is capable of bestowing on it, so also should men learn to live and act with a deep sense of detachment, selfless love, and generous service and to view everything in our possession as a worthy trust from the Divinity, which we call God, remembering, at the same time, that He can deprive us of anything when He so chooses and that we should not then feel pain or misery at the thought of loss or separation.

#### PLEASURE AND PAIN AND THEIR CAUSE

Attachment brings transient waves of pleasure and pain. When our relation with other things is characterized by physical and sensuous attachment, and we, for some reason or the other, fail to obtain those things, we feel pain. If we obtain them, we feel pleasure. But such pleasure or pain lasts for a short while only. It is not and cannot be permanent. For, all the material things of the universe with which we get attached are, by their very nature, perishable. Therefore, the

pleasure or pain that we derive by our attachment to the material objects of this universe fades away within a short time. However, from this transient experience of pleasure and pain man learns the great truth of life which leads him towards real knowledge. In all living beings, and especially in man, there exists an intense desire for permanent pleasure or happiness. And a time comes in the life of every man when he begins to realize the unreality and transitoriness of pleasure and pain. Then he understands that by attachment to material things he can never get permanent happiness, and that if he seeks spiritual union (*yoga*) with that immortal Life-Force called God, who is the changeless One in this ever changing world of many, he can attain to that state of permanent happiness for which his whole being is constantly yearning. This state of permanent happiness or Bliss Absolute (*Brahmānanda*) is the same as living in tune with the Infinite.

#### IN SALVATION LIES BLISS

Unselfish work leads to purity of heart (*citta-suddhi*) and this in turn to spiritual freedom through elimination of the individual ego. This is salvation or Self-realization or God-realization. In salvation lies the highest freedom and bliss; on attaining it, the individual's ego dissolves completely and he becomes a free soul (*jīvan-mukta*) who has achieved the one thing which is permanent and imperishable. When a man becomes unattached and unselfish, his actions do not forge fresh shackles of Karmic bondage. Such performance of action and devotion to God leads the individual to the blissful state of salvation which is beyond words.

#### UNIVERSAL GOODNESS CONSTITUTES THE RELIGION OF MAN

To acquire this blissful state one has to act, act incessantly and lovingly. Every action needs to be tested on the touchstone of universal goodness and moral worth. Any action which is right in accordance with truth and justice contributes to the awakening in



man of universal goodness. Universal goodness is in itself elevating, and whatever elevates and ennobles is man's religion. Elevation in every aspect of life forms the basis of the whole science and art of religion—elevation from ignorance to full knowledge, from the confined ego-state to the free state of the Soul. It is the process of man's going back (*Nivṛtti*) by conscious and determined effort, to the original source from which he has sprung. This one process is named variously by diff-

erent seers and men of God in different parts of the world.

'Man should fight man'—is not what Religion teaches;

Man to be man must ever be humane;  
Sense of humanity—the Brotherhood of Man,  
And Homage to Almighty—the Parenthood of God,

Are what any Religion worth the name aims at.  
Therefore, it behoves not man to decry

Religion;  
Realization by man of the True Self—the  
Great Truth—is its only goal.

## GAUTAMA BUDDHA

BY SWAMI ANANYANANDA

Gautama Buddha, the Blessed One, has come down to us through these shining centuries as *karuṇā* or Compassion personified. These centuries have not dimmed that beacon-light, the 'Light of Asia' as he has rightly been called. As his personality even so his teachings have diffused peace and blessedness wherever they have spread. Buddha is shining as ever in the hearts of millions all the world over as well as in his immortal message of 'a pure and perfect life'. It is this dominant note of *compassion* in the life of Buddha that the great poet Jayadeva has stressed in his famous *Daśavatāra-Stotra*, pointing out thereby the fact that this particular aspect forms the special feature of the Buddha-Avātara. The poet, recalling the well-known incident at Rajagriha where Buddha was prepared to offer his own life in order to save the life of a lamb, sings: 'Out of compassion thy heart melted away at the animal-sacrifice'.

It was this essential aspect of Buddha's teachings that was responsible for their wide diffusion and influence in different lands. 'In compassion for the world', says the Blessed One, exhorting the Bhikkus, 'go ye, O Bhikkus, and wander forth for the good of the many, for the welfare of the many, for

the good, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkus, the Doctrine glorious; preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure' (*Mahāvagga, Vinaya-piṭaka*). If today Buddhism found warm reception in the hearts of millions and claimed as adherents more than a third of humanity, it was due to an indestructible element of faith in the final Good that Buddha's message brought unto mankind. Buddha himself had immense faith in the ultimate goodness and greatness of man. One of his great utterances runs: 'Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as your lamp'. In these words is contained an un-failing hope and inspiration for humanity for all time. They are the proudest assertion ever made of human freedom.

Another aspect of the teachings of Buddha, no less important, is his constant declaration that the Buddhahood is not the exclusive monopoly of a chosen few only but that the same is attainable by one and all irrespective of caste, creed, or race. Men and women are equally entitled to attain Buddhahood. Buddha is not merely a person; it is the state of supreme enlightenment to which every sim-



cere aspirant is an heir. Buddha was never tired of repeating that he himself was an ordinary man like any other mortal and that *all* could attain to the Bodhisattva state and become Buddhas like himself. This was the dynamic message of a man to Man. He did not claim any speciality for himself in this regard. Like all seekers after truth, he too underwent every kind of hardship and privation, and overcame all the obstacles that confronted him on his way. Ultimately, after Knowledge dawned on him, he came back to the world at large, out of compassion to suffering humanity, with his message of peace and happiness, in order to share with others what he had obtained. Naturally, therefore, his message had an irresistible appeal and spread far and wide in the world. When Buddhism went abroad on its mission, it did so characteristically in the Indian way, showering peace before it and trailing benediction behind it. Buddhism did not conduct any crusade for carrying its message forward. It had no need to march cohorts and legions, with fire and sword in hand, in the cause of missionary zeal. Buddha was India's Spirit personified and his message was India's message of peace, love, gentleness, and happiness.

Although Buddha rose to the greatest spiritual heights, which are clearly beyond the reach of many a mortal, he yet came down from those heights to meet the ordinary people and to help them rise to those very heights. In doing so he carefully avoided all mystical disquisitions about abstruse philosophical problems. His was a realistic approach to help man grow morally and spiritually. With a view to making himself intelligible to the illiterate masses, he adopted the simple language of the common people, without taking recourse to Sanskrit. It was the sight of suffering, disease, decay, and death that made young Prince Siddhartha give up a kingdom and seek homelessness in order to find a way out. Siddhartha was destined to become the Buddha, the saviour of the poor, the miserable, and the downtrodden. His all-encompassing love and compassion to beings

and his intense passion to lift them out of their untold suffering would not let him remain attached to the throne. He set out to find the lasting solution, and after intense search and struggle he discovered it. Then he returned 'to live with beggars and the poor and the downcast', and to show the great path to them as well.

The result of his discovery was not any kind of intricately woven philosophy. He enunciated simple doctrines in the simplest language and that in a direct and appealing manner. He is one of the few world teachers who did not introduce anything fundamentally new in their teachings. He taught the age-old Upanishadic teachings clothed in the common *patois* which even the most illiterate could understand. He gave expression to the One Truth, and the difference, if any, was in the stress laid and not in the content of his message. What he discovered as the result of an intense search after Truth he enumerated thus: There is suffering in this world and the cause of all suffering is desire which man possesses for all kinds of enjoyment. Removal of desire will bring man real joy and eternal peace, and there is a way that leads to this cessation of desire. For achieving this end Buddha prescribed what he termed the Eightfold Noble Path, viz. Right Understanding, Right Mindedness, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Attentiveness, and Right Concentration.

Thus Buddhism came to be known more as an ethical than a philosophical religion. Rather, as we have it today, it is ethical in religion and idealistic in philosophy, so much so that a great thinker has called it 'Ethical Idealism' aiming at moral perfection. The most potent influence of Buddha's teachings has been on the moral and social aspects of life. Buddha did not lay much stress on metaphysical speculations. He even kept silent on many a purely philosophical problem. His very silence was mistaken and misinterpreted by later-day followers. In fact the pure ethical religion of Buddha suffered at the hands of shrewd intellectualism and



astute scholasticism. The result was the emergence of an elaborate and intricate dialectical philosophy—a thing which Buddha himself did not countenance in his lifetime. What Buddha disliked, his own followers, in their zeal, seem to have brought into existence by weaving legends and superstitions and fostering the affluent growth of vast metaphysical literature in the name of Buddha and his teachings.

In his sermons Buddha used simple and straight language. In the very first sermon that he preached he exhorted his disciples to steer clear of the Scylla of extreme self-indulgence and the Charybdis of extreme self-mortification. In support of this teaching he would cite his own example and show that that way did not lead him to Enlightenment. Then he would teach about the Four Noble Truths, viz. suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the method of attaining it through the Eightfold Path. 'Even as the water of the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, so has the doctrine and discipline only one taste, the taste of *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*)—the cessation of suffering'. Greed, hatred, and delusion—these three constitute the fundamental evils from which issue forth all the vices. To be free from these is the goal, to attain which the means is the Eightfold Path as enumerated above.

As an effective corollary to these teachings of Buddha, we have their deep social applications for the upliftment and progress of society. 'Do good and be good', he said, 'and go forth for the good of the many and for the welfare of the many'. This short but pregnant statement contains the inspiration needed for man to work and to prosper. And this is practical religion. The monastic order, the Sangha, that flourished for centuries after Buddha, with its innumerable monks and nuns ever engaged in working for the good and welfare of the community, in strict obedience to the dictum of the Blessed One, bears eloquent testimony to the practical aspect of the message of Buddha. And what was his own life but a continuous stream of intense

activity? He lived up to the ripe age of eighty and till the last moment of his life his one concern was to be helpful to his fellow men. He was a true Karma-Yogi in the real sense of the term. Buddha combined in himself the pure Upanishadic spirit of Jnana and the true ideal of Karma Yoga of the *Gita*. Swami Vivekananda has laid special stress on this aspect of Buddha's life, viz. synthesis of immense spirituality and intense activity. Speaking of Buddha he says: 'Let me tell you . . . about one man who actually carried this teaching of Karma Yoga into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice. All the prophets of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action. . . . But Buddha is the only prophet who said, "I do not care to know your various theories about God. Do good and be good and this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is"'. He is the ideal Karma-Yogi the greatest man ever born, beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-power that has ever been manifested'.

The message of Buddha was not confined to a certain clime and a certain time only. It has a universal appeal for all time and for all people. It is now, more than ever before, when the world is groaning under the tyranny of dry intellectualism and scientific materialism, that humanity would wish the compassionate heart of Buddha came on earth and reigned supreme in the lives of men and nations. The world today is in urgent need of such a combination of head and heart. Instead, the world has had to suffer from either lack of or lop-sided growth of man. Stress has been laid either more on the development of the heart than on the development of the head or *vice versa*. The evils of such one-sided emphasis are too well known to need enumeration. History has revealed them to us. From an undue stress on the faculties of the head have issued forth forces of tyranny and exploitation, and from an



undue stress on the faculties of the heart have resulted shameful subjection to such tyranny and exploitation and the loss of manly vigour—individual and national.

If we are to take lessons from history,—and take we must—, we have to drink deep and well at this mighty spring of Buddha's life and message. Watered by his life-giving tenets and nourished by his life's inspiration,

the vast and fertile field of this world will bring forth a rich harvest of men and women of the highest character. Then and then alone can mankind follow in the footsteps of the Blessed Bodhisattva and translate into practice his immortal teaching that 'hatred is not conquered by hatred, but only by love; that evil is not overcome by evil, but only by returning good for evil'.

## HIGHER IMMEDIACY

BY P. S. SASTRI

By Immediacy I mean that experience which is known as '*nirvikalpa*' in Advaita Vedanta. It is an experience which is direct and unmediated. In every experience we have a subject and an object. The object is always a felt object, an object that comes against the felt background. The feeling and the object are experienced as an immediate felt unity. There is no consciousness of any distinction at that moment. The moment feeling is united with an object we get at the content of feeling which not only transcends itself but also makes itself universal. That is, feeling becomes 'universal, communicable, expansive'.<sup>1</sup>

Everything passes through feeling, and the whole world appears to us only in experience. Everything is experienced in feeling and depends on feeling to the extent of its being experienced. There is an object which is felt and it is as such distinct from feeling. Feeling is immediately experienced. How can we relate immediate experience to the object which transcends it? A relation can only be between two terms which must be objects. And if feeling were to be a term in the relation, to that extent it transcends immediacy

and fails to be a felt totality. In every experience we have feeling which is not an object; and all that we apprehend is a unity which does not reveal itself as relational. The elements or parts of this unity might turn out to be interrelated; and the relational content is a part of the felt background. As such Prakāshātman states, '*Caitanyenāsamsṛṣṭasya pratiḍhāsa eva na syāt*'.<sup>2</sup>

An object that is not felt is no object at all. What is felt is a unity of feeling and the object; and we can try to find out the relation of these two. But 'every distinction and relation still rests on an immediate background of which we are aware, and every distinction and relation (so far as experienced) is also felt, and felt in a sense to belong to an immediate totality'.<sup>3</sup> The feeling is a non-relational whole because the analysis of feeling can never reveal anything lying beyond the experience proper. But within the experience we have a diversity. This diversity does not constitute divisions within the experience but only distinctions. The feeling that constitutes the background and basis of all experience can be resolved into the object felt, the living

<sup>2</sup> Vivaraṇa.

<sup>3</sup> F. H. Bradley: *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 178.

<sup>1</sup> B. Bosanquet: *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 39.



emotion that one feels, and the individual that feels. As Bradley puts it, 'In my general feeling at any moment there is more than the objects before me, and no perception of objects will exhaust the sense of a living emotion'.<sup>4</sup> In the language of Whitehead, the feeling is prehension, the object is the datum, and the living emotion is the subjective form. The object or the datum is that which is felt, while the living emotion is not the object before the experiencing subject. This living emotion determines the process of integration by 'clothing each concrete exhibition of the subject-object situation'.<sup>5</sup> Prakashatman was almost the first to propound this view: '*Samvedanasya bhedāvabhāsa śūnyatvād-anubhavādhīna siddhikasya ca viśayavad-anātmatvād-ekah sthāyyātmaivānubhavah*'.<sup>6</sup>

Feeling reveals no differences since its nature is to unify. However much we may abstract it from the self, it does not completely become an object. There is always an element of feeling which is the subject. In the language of Bradley, 'At every moment my stage of experience, whatever else it is, is a whole of which I am immediately aware. It is an experienced non-relational unity of many in one'.<sup>7</sup>

Feeling, then, turns out to be an aspect of consciousness, the aspect that welds the many into a whole. And experience itself is not a relation of a subject to something outside of or external to the subject. It is the inclusive whole and therefore offers the interrelation of the many in one. The one is the Self or Consciousness which experiences; and it unifies the objects by virtue of the fact that it assimilates them all to itself. It accompanies all objects, being immanent in them and coextensive with them. Hence it is said, '*Premāspadatayā, kūṭasthatayā, sāksitayā, viśayendriyādyanuṣṭhita caitanya rūpatayā,*

*cānubhūyamāno'mśa ātmā. Tasmād idam anidam ātmako'ham pratyayah*'.<sup>8</sup>

Consciousness as feeling has always a tendency to appear as both the *this* and the *I*. When the content of feeling becomes objective, it undergoes an important transformation. Feeling is not a blank intensity. It has a content and is always expressed. It is not prior to this content since we feel *something* and never feel the feeling alone. This content gives feeling a new meaning every time. And because it has a meaning, the artist is able to objectify it in art. That which is devoid of a content is devoid of detail, organization, and expression. As Nettleship observes, 'If you go to art to get your own feeling reproduced, you find it useless and flat, just because mere feeling cannot find expression, and your feeling must be at any rate potentially endowed with form before you can be emotionally receptive of real form'.<sup>9</sup> The form is the objectivity of the feeling as such. This objectivity means clearly that the individual consciousness and the object are not two distinguishable entities. In the words of Prakashatman, '*Samvid-abhedo'parokṣa prakāśamānatā nāma*'.<sup>10</sup> Immediacy means the awareness of the object as non-different from the subject. This non-difference does not do away with the parts but only with their differences. For, '*Samvid-avabhāsādhīnatvād-artha sattā niścayasya*'.<sup>11</sup> The object exists only so far as it is dependent upon consciousness. But the reality and existence of consciousness does not depend upon that of the object, for the existence of the object is itself to be proven.<sup>12</sup> The object is *known* to exist, and this is the apprehension by a mind. It is an immediate apprehension which involves the unity of

<sup>8</sup> *Vivaraṇa-Prameya-Saṅgraha*.

<sup>9</sup> *Remains*, I. 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Vivaraṇa*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> '*Na hyartha sattā niścayādhīnah samvit sattā niścayah, artha sattā niścayasyāpi niścayāntarādhīnatva prasangāt*' (*Ibid.*). See *Vivaraṇa-Prameya-Saṅgraha*: '*Samvinnīścayah svata eva, tad-adhīnā cārtha sattā*'.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> A. N. Whitehead: *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 298.

<sup>6</sup> *Vivaraṇa*.

<sup>7</sup> *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 175.



consciousness and the objects; and it is a unity in which the objects cease to have an independent status apart from consciousness. For, the objects owe their reality and existence to the feeling self, and the feeling self feels because of the objects. Thus starting as an undifferentiated whole, feeling has a tendency to become a coherent whole.

Any experience, however, is immediate and valuable in the highest sense if it satisfies the individual and if the individual feels himself affirmed therein. Here, that which is felt about an object is taken as the content or significance of the object itself. This content or significance is made explicit in the moment of experience. And we judge the object with reference to the content of the experience which is immediate. Feeling, therefore, becomes truly objective by assimilating the objects to itself. Thus when we hear Dawes Hicks saying that feeling is 'a way in which the conscious subject participates in the objects which he apprehends'<sup>13</sup> we should accept it with great reserve.

The object in the immediate experience is that which satisfies us. It can satisfy only when it does not involve any reference outside of itself. Such an object is an all-inclusive reality. But the actual object of perception is incomplete and as such it fails to satisfy us. This is remedied when the actual object undergoes a transformation which is in part due to the external world with which it is closely bound. The external world of the other objects constituting the not-self is not actually present before us in cognition. But the objects enter into the cognitive state through the perceptual field which sums them up. As Whitehead observes, 'The distribution of the subjective form (=living emotion) among the separate prehensions (=feelings) refers primarily to the conformal origins of the subjective form derived from the various components of the total objective datum'.<sup>14</sup> That is,

the actual object appears as a unity and yet it is internally differentiated. The internal differentiations are not cognized as differentiations, since what is felt is always a unity or a whole which is organized by the activity of thought as such. The object of perception includes within itself a reference to other objects external to itself and those elements that are distinguished within it. In all immediate experience, thought or consciousness intuits the being of the object and thus assimilates it to itself. It is in reality '*san-mātra viṣayam*'. As such the reference of the object to something outside itself is not excluded from the felt content. But what is apprehended is the fact that this reference is not essential to its nature, for the object is seen to develop itself from within itself; and the content, though not distinguished, is actually felt as being there.<sup>15</sup>

Such an apprehension is almost the culmination of thought. A great sorrow has the power to affect the personality of the common man so deeply as to make him utter something great which no one can forget or ignore. That is, the great feeling does not behave in an irrational way. It embodies and reveals the deepest logic. Strength of feeling and unconsciousness of effort in expressing it function in close collaboration with the intellect of man. And feeling as expressed is always enriched by perceptions and ideas. Consequently, to speak of the immediate experience as only the beginning of knowledge and experience is to speak something unintelligible.

The immediate experience is a positive whole of consciousness.<sup>16</sup> It is real. It is neither subjective nor objective. The real is that which is felt. The real world is a unity of feeling and the felt. It is not subjective since it does not involve the self of the individual alone. It is not objective since it does not exclude the experiencing self. It is the

<sup>13</sup> *Immediate Experience* (Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume 9, p. 187).

<sup>14</sup> *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 327.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Śloka-Vārttikā* (4. 113): '*Na viśeṣo na sāmānyam tadānīm anubhūyate Tayor-ādhāra bhūtā tu vyaktir-evāvaśiṣyate*'. See also 4. 112, 118.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*: '*Pratyakṣa pramā tu atra caitanyam-eva*'.



meeting point of the self and the not-self in an undifferentiated whole. That is, it is the experience of Reality and Reality should, therefore, be non-relational. The Reality that is felt is something that is comprehended in, and yet transcends, feeling. And what in reality we experience is only the unity fostered by feeling; and what we seek for is a unity that unites the two aspects of Reality. Such a unity is immediately given to us in the aesthetic experience.

Anything that is felt is real, and to be real it must fall within sentience. This sentience is the same as the awareness of the self. That is, all experience involves some object or other. It is an object that is experienced and all our knowledge arises from the object which is the 'this' in the judgment. Everything in the world that is experienced has to become an object, and the object is the one source of our experience. The 'this' or the object means that it stands for what it means. It exists and has a content appropriate to its reality. This content is revealed as a coherent whole in experience and it is a whole which affirms something of reality. And yet the object is only fragmentary since each object has its own unique and specific features. Each implies and involves a reference to or relation with other objects. This relation integrates all the particulars into one system of reality. That is, this relation involves the inner being of the objects. As such no object can stand by itself, and no one can exclude or reject others. This is the principle governing the self-transcendence of all finite entities. This self-transcendence is no other than the reference of the content of experience to a Reality which includes that very experience itself. It is a reference that does not fall outside of Reality. Therefore does Padmapāda say: '*Asmat pratyayatvam abhimato'ham-kārah. Sa cedam anidam rūpa vastu-garbhaḥ, sarva loka sāksikah*'.<sup>17</sup> The 'I' in the immediate apprehension is not the exclusive individual, nor is the feeling a private feeling. The

'I' is the felt background, presentational continuum, foundational consciousness. It embodies the unity of the object (*idam*) and the not-object (*anidam*), and it is, therefore, the foundation of all experience and knowledge. It is non-relational and non-sensuous.<sup>18</sup>

There can, then, be an experience that does not require the sensuous character. In such an experience we find the intuitive operation of thought, for feeling as an aspect of thought alone has a meaning and an existence. And all concrete thought has a tendency to become immediate or to reveal itself immediately. In this immediacy we do not have a system of the many; for, the perceptual character of a cognition lies not in its sensuous origin but in the realization of non-difference between the apprehending self and the apprehended not-self, where the not-self is an aspect of the Real, a phase of Self-consciousness.

We do not have at any moment pure feeling. We are never purely aesthetic, or purely moral, or purely intellectual, at any time. We have always a unity in experience, a unity where no diversity can be found. This diversity is absorbed and unified in perfection. The unity of feeling gives a certain solidarity to the self with itself and with the others. There is a unity of the self with something beyond, and this unity constitutes the unity and character of the self. In this reference to the beyond, the self endeavours to realize that perfection or completeness which is rooted in its nature. And the perfection is not realized until and unless the experiencing self feels itself identical with its objects. In terms of this identity of the self and the not-self is all apprehension to be defined.<sup>19</sup> Defining perception in terms of thought, Dharmarājādhvarindra observes: '*Pramāṇa caitanyasya viśayāvacchinna caitanyābheda iti*'.<sup>20</sup> The unity of the subject and the object which is the

<sup>18</sup> *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*: '*Nirvikalpakaṁ tu saṁsargānavagāhi jñānam*'.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*: '*Pramāṇy sattātirikta sattākatva sūnyatve sati योग्यत्वम् विषयस्य प्रत्यक्षम्*'.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Pancapādika*.



central feature of all immediate experience is in reality an identity, since both the subject and the object are comprehended as the two elements of Consciousness.

If this doctrine of Immediacy can be applied to the aesthetic experience, it can stand against all other possible objections. For, the sensuous element in the aesthetic sphere has been taken by the critics to determine the nature of this experience as one of mediacy. In the aesthetic experience, the poet is concerned with the perceptual field, and we with the work of art. The experience that one has here is not directed towards creating something that does not exist, for the duty of the artist is only to make explicit that which is the life or meaning of the given whole. In this he acts only as the medium of revelation. And if beauty is something that is produced by the association or interrelation of a variety of factors, how can we explain natural beauty? Natural beauty is something inherent in the objects themselves. Such an inherent or immanent principle manifests itself in experience as truth, goodness, and beauty. That is, the beautiful is not a process but an existent state. In this state we come across the relational and sensuous aspects which are in fact provided by the media of the fine arts. In poetry, for instance, we have the sounds as sensuous elements; and in the experience of the aesthetic state we have the relational whole comprising the emotions and the like. And whenever we experience the aesthetic state, we do so through the mediation of these sensuous and relational factors. Consequently, the aesthetic experience refuses to be called immediate.

To this ostensible objection, however, Jagannātha gives the reply thus: 'Sā (rasa carvanā) śabda-vyāpāra-bhāvyatvāc-chābdī, Aparokṣa, sukhāmbanātvāc-cāparokṣātmikā; tat-tvam vākya-ja buddhi-vat'.<sup>21</sup> From the standpoint of the creative artist, the aesthetic experience involves the existence of an embodied object, whatever its nature may be.

<sup>21</sup> *Rasa-Gangādhara*.

But for the reader or the spectator, it involves the presence or the existence of the medium through which the content or thought is revealed. In the case of poetry the medium consists of words; and it is in and through words that we have the aesthetic experience which is direct and immediate at the same time. The example given is the experience that arises from the sentence, 'That Thou Art'.

A sentence like 'That Thou Art' gives us perceptual knowledge; and it is an example of immediate apprehension. Perception cannot be defined only in terms of the sensibility. The object of perception must be capable (*yogya*) of being perceived<sup>22</sup>; and since this principle of '*yogyatva*' is comprehensive enough to include the sensibility in itself, perception is always to be spoken of as in terms of the former.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the nature of perception lies in the realization of a state of non-difference between the subject and the object. Now, in the sentence 'That Thou Art', the 'Thou', the experiencing subject, is the object of perception and the judgment effects non-difference between the 'Thou' and the 'That'.<sup>24</sup>

But how can a verbal perception be immediate? A sentence is always relational since the meaning of a sentence is mediated by the related group of meanings of words. Hence it may be urged that the poetic experience is not immediate.

To this we reply that the relation of the meanings of words in a sentence is not the criterion for arriving at the meaning of a sentence. If we are to rely only on the meanings of the words and their interrelations, a sentence like 'bring the *saindhava*', spoken of by one while dining, might refer to a horse, since '*saindhava*' means both a horse and salt. That is, the intention of the speaker and the context of the utterance should not be

<sup>22</sup> *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Nahi indriya-janyatvam pratyakṣatve tantram, dūṣitatvat'.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Evam "tat tvam asi" ityādi vākya-janya jñānasyapi tatra pramātureva viśayatayā tad-ubhayābhedasya sattvāt'.



ignored. Hence it is not the relational continuum that mediates the meaning of a sentence. On the contrary, it is the 'tātparya' or the total import. This 'tātparya' enables us to apprehend the sentence immediately and directly. Such an immediate apprehension is spoken of as 'akhaṇḍārtha' which is defined by Chitsukha thus: 'Samsargāsangi samyag dhī hetutā yā girām iyam uktākhaṇḍārthatā yad vā tat prātipadikārthatā'.<sup>25</sup> The 'akhaṇḍārtha' or the import of a judgment is unmediated, non-relational, direct, and immediate. Such is the immediacy of the apprehension in the aesthetic world also. Thus Vishvanātha observes: 'Sattvodorekāḍ-akhaṇḍa sva prakāśānanda cinmayah'.<sup>26</sup> It is an immediate apprehension characterized by a harmonious expansion of the self, by a realization of Self-consciousness, and by a transcendental unity of the self and the not-self. Hence it is spoken of as 'akhaṇḍa' or non-relational, and 'nirvikalpa' or immediate. It is due to this feature

that the reader or the spectator realizes non-difference with the poet and his characters: 'Pramātā tad-abhedena svātmānam pratipadyate'.<sup>27</sup>

This is the principle of 'sādhāraṇīkaraṇa' which, as Bhatta Nāyaka has taught us, is realized in and through imagination (*bhāvanā*). This 'sādhāraṇīkaraṇa' is the negative capability which makes the experience non-relational. One does not feel that the behaviour of the actor is his own, nor does he take it to be the actor's or the character's. We do not differentiate and analyse the elements but enter into the poetic world and live it.<sup>28</sup> In so doing we transcend the distinctions of subject and object, and we arrive at the identity of the two in terms of the foundational consciousness which is Reality or Brahman. And we as the various 'modes' of this Reality apprehend that Reality in every experience immediately.

<sup>25</sup> *Tattva-Pradīpikā*.

<sup>26</sup> *Sāhitya-Darpaṇa*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> See *Abhinava Bhārati*, I. 280.

## ROLE OF INDIANS IN ANCIENT BURMESE HISTORY

BY DR. DHIRENDRA NATH ROY

(Continued from the April issue)

Down in the south from Pegu to the tail-end of Tenasserim is another important region of this country representing a distinct cultural history of its own. The people of this region are different from the Burmans. They are known as Mons or Talaings. They were Indian in their racial origin, having come on land-route from the north-east of India and later by sea-route from Telangana, an ancient coastal region where now stands the historic Andhra-desh, between Orissa and Madras. They claim to be the earliest immigrants in Burma. The culture which developed with

the first settlement of these Talaings was naturally Indian. The earliest chief centre of this culture was in the historic coastal city of Thaton. Tradition tells us that it was founded about the middle of the sixth century B.C. In its initial stage Thaton represented a civil settlement composed mainly of Indian traders. But traders as they were they were not absolutely inexperienced in the art of fighting, at least fighting for self-defence. It was a sheer necessity that made them cultivate this art in the foreign land. One can imagine that they were not looked upon with much favour



by the original inhabitants to whom they naturally appeared as a lot of strange intruders. Resistance inevitably came from them during the early encounters, but before the superior organization, valour, and skill of the immigrants they finally had to yield or withdraw. To the immigrant Indians they were Rākshasas as to the Burmese chroniclers they were known as Nāgas or Bilus. Slowly the Talaings established a kingdom around Thaton. The rich natural resources of the land enabled them to develop it into a prosperous kingdom, so much so that it truly acquired the name of Suvāna-bhūmi or the golden land. The kingdom rapidly expanded far to the north to include the vast region surrounding another rising city called Pegu. It thus soon became a powerful rival to its almost contemporary northern kingdom of Prome or Thirikettara. The increasing power thus acquired inspired the Talaings to launch frequent incursions upon the northern kingdom which, unfortunately, had also to face similar troubles from the Arakanese in its western border. Having been cruelly harassed by the raiding forces from two sides, it could not succeed for long in maintaining its defence and the result was, as we have already seen, that it ultimately disintegrated and collapsed. The Talaings, however, claimed that it was they who caused the collapse of Prome.

It has been admitted by historians that the Talaings who had built up an extensive kingdom in Lower Burma,<sup>1</sup> were comparatively far more civilized than those who were then living in Upper Burma. It is said that the civilization which they had brought with them from India into their new settlement and then had rapidly developed by their enterprising efforts was unequalled in the whole land now called Burma. Along with their diverse articles of trade they brought all their ideas, traditions, manners, and customs, indeed all their social and religious institutions, to make their new homeland a fair replica of their

motherland. As in Upper Burma here too Brahmanism came first to be succeeded by Buddhism. The two certainly had their periods of conflict till the two became intermingled in the lives of the people, with Buddhism ultimately prevailing over Brahmanism. The new protestant religion flourished here in far more orthodox form than in Upper Burma. The reason was that it was the followers of the Southern School Buddhism who came to settle here together with the earlier immigrants. Later there also came some powerful preachers to propagate the new faith unalloyed by any religious accretions from extraneous sources. Unlike in Upper Burma where Tibetan Shamanism and the Tantrism of Eastern India flowed in and got profusely mixed up with what is known as the Northern or Mahāyāna Buddhism which in its turn had drawn much from the old Sanskrit culture, there were in Lower Burma no old or outlandish religious cults to change the original purity of the kind of Buddhism that came there.

Exactly when this Buddhism first came to the golden land it is difficult to say. Perhaps it came sometime in the third century B.C., or more precisely during the reign of Emperor Asoka. Some early Buddhist writers of the Southern School tell us that at this time a great convocation known as the Third Buddhist Council of leading Buddhists was held at Pataliputra at the instance of the great Emperor. It was decided in the Council that qualified Theras or Buddhist elders should be sent abroad to preach and establish the religion of Lord Buddha. Tissa Moggaliputta, President of the Council, selected a good number of them to be deputed to the different parts of the world. The well-known Theras Sona and Uttara were assigned the task of spreading the doctrine in Suvāna-bhūmi. If this was a fact one can have no doubt that the work of such eminent missionaries must have had its unfailing inspiration for the people at large to accept the new faith in its pure form. There are some people, however, who have got their reasons, not without some

<sup>1</sup> This includes both Thaton and Pegu, though the latter was established after about a thousand years of Thaton.



force in them, to question the truth of this Buddhist convention.<sup>2</sup>

But the Burmese Chronicles hold it as true, and the people of Burma have no doubt about it. Unfortunately the few fragments of Talaing Chronicle still available tell us not much about it with any appreciable force of conviction. If there was anything written convincingly on this matter it might have been destroyed by the Burmese conqueror Alaungpaya when he invaded and practically annihilated the Talaing kingdom. But even assuming that there was no such Buddhist Council convened by Emperor Asoka, it hardly repudiates the time-honoured belief among all Burmans that Sona and Uttara did actually come to this colonist kingdom and propagate the new faith with phenomenal success. There was another fact that might have occasioned a good influx of Buddhist missionaries from India to this golden peninsula. During the third and second centuries B.C., after the fall of the Maurya Empire, Buddhism in Central and Eastern India was subjected to severe persecution under the Brahmanic dynasty of the Sungas. Pushyamiitra, founder of this dynasty, resorted to every violent means to eradicate Buddhism. As a result, the oppressed Buddhists had to fly *en masse* southward from the far-extended empire of the Sungas. Many of them, including devout Buddhist monks, must have crossed the Bay of Bengal and reached the nearest outside settlement of their own nationals in Lower Burma. The old settlers with their Brahmanic tradition might not have welcomed the new faith of the new arrivals, but the national sentiments for co-nationals in a foreign land had its own strength to prevail, at least during their first meeting period, with a fair amount of social toleration. The long period which followed called for an adjustment of the religious differences through a series of hectic misunderstanding and conflict. The new faith, of course, had its stronger

vitality to justify itself against the old ; but the old thing also maintains its surviving value, if not through its intrinsic qualities, at least through the deep sentiment born of long adherence. So the struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism went on even here for a long time. The result was that though Buddhism eventually got the upper hand, it had to make some compromises with Brahmanism to get its final establishment secure.

The greatest impetus for Buddhism, however, came when at the end of the fourth century or rather at the beginning of the fifth century one of its greatest apostles named Buddhaghosha arrived here with a wealth of sacred literature including a complete set of the Tripitakas and their commentaries. The Talaings received this Buddhist divine with utmost enthusiasm, affectionately claiming him as their fellow countryman. After his arrival Buddhism of the Southern School, of which he was the best exponent, began to flourish triumphantly over the entire Talaing kingdom and slowly reach even further beyond its northern border.

The civilization which flourished in this kingdom was undoubtedly superior to any that was then extant in Upper Burma. Professor D. G. E. Hall writes in his recent book on *Europe and Burma* that 'compared with the Mons (Talaings), the Burmese were uncivilized barbarians when they entered the country'. Its well-developed agriculture, art and craft, language and literature, purer religion in the form of Theravāda Buddhism, its golden shrines and large monasteries, and most other things spoke eloquently of the creative, co-operative, and assimilative genius of the Talaings. They were and still are rightly proud of their ancient cultural achievements. Their military prowess was for long the terror of the northerners. Time was when perhaps they could subjugate all northerners and extend their ruling power over the entire land of Burma. But they were satisfied with their own area of the golden land which gave them everything they needed, while the dry arid land and the extreme climate of the north

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. R. C. Majumdar's article on 'Buddhist Councils', published in *Buddhist Studies* by Dr. B. C. Law, Thacker, Spink & Co., Ltd. (1931).



hardly inspired them for any further colonial adventures. They lived and worked in close social relationship with the native inhabitants who slowly became united with them in one great society. They sought to harness all the energy of a new life in a new settlement for building up their new kingdom and new civilization to their heart's choice. Cities arose and grew up larger and larger, at first Thaton, then Pegu, and many others here and there. Both Thaton and Pegu were large seaports so long as the sea had not receded from these places. Foreigners from far-off lands came there by sea to exchange their trade-goods with Lower Burma. Indeed to the outer world, as Harvey rightly points out, Burma meant Lower Burma. It was thus an envy of not a few Burmese kings who used to cast upon it a greedy eye to some day acquire it or destroy it. This they actually started with King Anawratha invading and seizing whatever he could from there, and several other kings following him, till came the time in the eighteenth century for King Alaungpaya to destroy all the vestiges of the glorious Talaing kingdom. From the sixth century B. C. to the eighteenth century A.D. it was too long a time for this civilization, as it would be for any civilization, to avoid some ups and downs. That the Talaings could preserve their civilization through the grim exigencies of all this time is in itself a sufficient evidence of their remarkable wisdom and resourcefulness. But pure Buddhism as prevailed among them, with its clear and unequivocal emphasis upon the softer virtues of life, might have profoundly worked upon them long enough to cause their traditional urges for heroic resistance against any aggression, however strong and violent, to become weaker and weaker till they became too weak to resist. So the kingdom ultimately met its sad destiny at the hands of the virile northerners. But its golden gifts to the whole of Burma are the undying facts which continue to adorn the proud history of the Talaings in Lower Burma.

Having thus traversed the vast field of Burma's remote past, so profoundly rich in

culture, we are now in a position to admit that the whole perspective appears to be aglow with Indian contributions. Nay, we are fairly certain that the cultural background of the Burmese people is in almost all respects Indian. The British historians are very certain about it. Mr. D. G. E. Hall, who had long served as Professor of History in the University of Rangoon and is now a professor in the School of Oriental Studies under the London University, is convinced that the Burmese got their civilization from the Mons. The Mons had received most of their culture including the Buddhist religion from India. Here is again what Mr. G. E. Harvey, who is widely regarded as an authority on Burmese history and whose book on Burmese history is still used as a standard text-book throughout Burma, says:

'The Burmese are a Mongolian race, yet none of their traditions hark back to China or to Mongolian things: all hark back to India. The early part of their chronicles reads as if they were descended from Buddha's clansmen and lived in Upper India. Even their folklore is largely Hindu; the fairy-tale book *Princess Thudhammansari* (*Sudhā-Manjari*) contains clear references to caste; the legends of Princess Beda, of Alaungdaw Kathapa, of the Shwesettan and Shwedagon pagodas, are all copied from Indian originals. As in the rest of Indo-China, most of their towns have two names, one vernacular and the other classical Indian. Just as the Latin church made it fashionable for every city in medieval Europe to have a Roman name whether the Romans had been there or not, so the Hindu expansion caused a fashion for Sanskrit and Pali place-names in Burma. A few of such names are due to actual immigration from the original namesake; thus Ussa, the old name for Pegu, is the same word as Orissa, and Pegu was colonized from Orissa. The surviving traditions of the Burmese are Indian because their own Mongolian traditions died out. The only classes among them who could read and write and thus keep traditions alive, were their ruling Indian class, the Hindu colonists'.<sup>3</sup>

What Mr. Harvey says briefly in a small paragraph I have already shown in greater particulars. Yet a lot more can be stated to further amplify his points or add some more to these. But it is hardly necessary here, for

<sup>3</sup> *Outline of Burmese History* (1947), p. 5.



we have still much to say about it in the Burmese history that followed.

But we must not omit here one important fact underlying the Indian background of Burmese culture. Whether in Upper Burma or in Arakan or in Lower Burma, the Burmese people, though Mongolian by race, were enlightened and broad-minded enough to appreciate the Indians whose political and cultural leadership they willingly accepted for the rapid progress of their country. There was nothing in this Indian leadership that was derogatory or degrading to the native inhabitants. For, the Indians in those times came to Burma to make it their permanent homeland and themselves the fellow countrymen of its people. As a result the Burmese people, who were vastly superior in number to the Indian immigrants, slowly absorbed the latter, while the superior culture of the latter absorbed the simple culture of the former. Racially the Indians became Burmanized and culturally the Burmans became Indianized. It was indeed a physical victory for one and a spiritual victory for the other,—a case of victory for both.

It gives little satisfaction to cover such a long period of a country's cultural history in a manner I have just attempted. For over nineteen centuries kingdom after kingdom arose here and there, chiefly through the genius of the Indian immigrants, prospered long amidst congenial atmosphere, and finally decayed through internal exhaustion and external aggression. From the vast ocean of Indian culture wave after wave came successively to overflow each kingdom and bathe its united people, hitherto scattered in tribal groups, each in its complacent isolation, to enthuse them for a newer and greater realization of corporate life. A rich land without a name, unknown to the outside world, and ignorant of its potentiality, began for the first time to be conscious of itself. When the land became known as Burma to the outside world, it had already gone a long way to make its own history and develop its own distinct civilization.

Yet this long period of Burma's cultural development, period beginning at least from 900 B. C. to 1000 A.D., practically approximating two millenniums, has been affably described by many writers of history, mostly foreigners, as legendary or prehistoric. Their main point is that the facts supplied by the Burmese Chronicle, the only authoritative record of Burma's past, are so bafflingly interwoven with 'fantastic fables' that a true historian can hardly accept them as of any historical value. And even these are all about the royal court-life which represents practically nothing about the actual conditions of the people. While there is admittedly some force in their point of view, it hardly supports their outright assumption of such a vast period, so replete with facts about the ruling dynasties and their organized kingdoms, as prehistoric or legendary. It is one thing to see a period without any scientifically recorded history and quite another thing to dismiss it altogether as prehistoric. Tagaung, Prome, and pre-Anawrathan Pagan certainly made history, although perhaps none had thought about writing it. Arakan and Talaing Burma had also their glorious histories now lying buried in the faint memory of the rich cultural superstructures that once majestically stood over their emblazoned capital cities. If we can have histories of such dead and buried civilization as in ancient Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and Chaldea, even as of the ancient Aztecs and the Incas, why should Burma's ancient civilization, which seemed to have developed fairly in a continuous process under powerful ruling dynasties of the same or partially mixed racial stock, be considered or virtually dismissed as non-historical? Beneath many places of Burma's land and rocky surface and the changing river valleys there may lie vast treasures of ancient civilization like those discovered in the Nile valley, in some mountains of Eastern Persia, and at Ur. For archaeological exploration Burma still remains a virgin field. Who can say that there were no Mohenjo-Daros and Harappas also in this eastern extension of



ancient India? The great river Irrawaddy may be as glorious as the Indus. And then the facile verdict on Burmese Chronicle! Those British historians who reject its ancient record of facts as 'fantasies like those of the Arabian Nights' do not seem to remember how Europe's early history was written at first. Was it any less fantastic and legendary? The high dignitaries of the Christian Church, who were the sole repositories of knowledge for more than a thousand years in Europe, wrote it. They corrupted history by reducing it to a branch of theology. Miracles and lies were their fond obsession with which they applied themselves to this work. Buckle, in his classical production *History of Civilization in England*, has given us enough 'facts' of these early European historians,—facts which will stagger even the fantastic imagination of a child. Nevertheless Europe has got its reliable history of those ancient times. The post-Renaissance historians, who had freed themselves from the cobwebs of medieval theology, sifted facts from fantasies, colligated them with a truly scientific spirit and finally achieved it. Could not the history of ancient Burma be similarly achieved? When are we going to have a similar Renaissance in Burma and India?

The kingdom of Tagaung arose and lasted four hundred years. When Tagaung fell Prome was built by the descendants of the last Tagaung king and continued gloriously for about six hundred years. Again a descendant of the last king of Prome left the fallen kingdom to build a new one at Pagan, which continued for about nine hundred years till the time of king Anawratha with whom, we are told, began the real history of Burma. Can anybody believe that the three kingdoms, which arose one after another in fairly continuous succession and covered the long period of nineteen hundred years, did not make any history? Should we remain content by consigning it to prehistoric obscurity and naively talk of Anawratha's eleventh century as marking the beginning of Burmese history? That is both sad and ridiculous. No Burmans

believe it, no true student of culture and civilization can accept it. The Burmese Chronicle gives a good mass of facts of this period to form a fair basis of history. What remains to be done and must be done to have a well-written history is to re-explore thoroughly all possible sources of information regarding this vast period—those that are above the land surface and those that are still beneath it, make a scientific colligation of all rescued materials in relation to those that have already been known, and then present the whole thing in an orderly sequence with a rational interpretation of its historical authenticity. Until this is done, no Burman proud of his country's past and no Indian proud of his cultural heritage should rest at ease.

Nay, I should like to go further. One should not think that Burmese history began with the rise of the kingdom of Tagaung in 900 B.C. What about the period previous to this kingdom? The indigenous people who formed the major population of this kingdom certainly had some modicum of culture, primitive or advanced, to appreciate the value of life in a greater society which the kingdom represented. Besides, Tagaung, though it was a fairly large kingdom in those ancient days, comprised only a small area of the entire land. How about the other areas? Tagaung was for the most part a rugged high land with none too favourable conditions for the growth of a civilization. On the other hand, the extensive fertile lands in the lower valleys of the various rivers which afforded more favourable natural conditions must have had their group-settlers. Burma beside Tagaung did not mean at that time all jungles and no men. The statement I have quoted at the beginning from H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* rules it out. There certainly were other group-settlers elsewhere in the land, living in their established society and having their own peculiar ways of life. They certainly had their own manners and customs, their ideas and tradition, which might still be existing in many unrecognized, almost forgotten stories and fables of old. The present Burmans can hardly afford, as no civilized



people can afford, to neglect or forget altogether such basic conditions of their cultural history which reveal unmistakable clues to their racial traits and peculiarities. The soul of the people had its birth in them. That birth-story is as indispensable for Burma's cultural history as its later chronological events. What a distinguished Japanese scholar said in comment about the people of the Philippines who think that their cultural history began with the coming of the Spaniards should apply equally to Burma. In course of a series of lectures delivered in the University of the Philippines, at Manila, in 1939, he said:

'Since I have come over to the Philippines, people have told me that the Philippines was under the domination of the Spaniards for four hundred years, and previous to that time according to some Filipinos, they had not very much in the way of culture. But I differ in that respect from these Filipino scholars. At present there may not be much culture found among these Filipinos out in this country, but if you get hold of some indications of their primitive civilization and analyse them in the light of modern science, comparing the times

and conditions and try to find out what is contained in the civilization of old time, I am sure you can find something very important. Nor would I believe that in the mythological ages of Japan we could have found anything worthy if we admitted those very ages were like fables and not trustworthy. But instead of doing that we have analysed them; and the more you study, and the more you go in, the more treasure you will find. There are some indications of truth which we have taken up. And by observing, by comparing, by studying them, then making researches to every discovery we find in that very code of life in Japan civilization worth preserving today. . . . Because the old civilization does not come up to the present standard, it does not mean that the Filipino civilization does not exist. Because there were no airplanes in those days, you cannot say that the old civilization was nothing. . . . In point of love and respect, in point of happiness, in point of humanity, in point of human relationship that type of primitive civilization might have been far better than what we have now. In my opinion we are not happier and more civilized in our mentality than the people of those days'.<sup>4</sup>

(Concluded)

Dr. Yoshitara Negishi, Litt.D.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The soul hungers for and seeks union with God. Does not God, in His infinite love and mercy, descend and come forward to meet the soul? In *Sita Lost*, the writer suggests an original meaning to the epic story of Rama going in search of Sita. The allegorical interpretation of the *Rāmāyana* is not unknown in India and some treatises such as the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyana* deal with the relation between the individual soul and the supreme Self while narrating the story. . . .

*The Message of Swami Vivekananda* is the report of the illuminating address delivered by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, the eminent national leader and a master mind of our generation, when he presided over the Swami

Vivekananda birthday anniversary celebrations held at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on the 17th February, 1952. It is translated from the original Hindi. . . .

Dr. Radha Govinda Basak, M.A., Ph.D., leading Indologist and former Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Presidency College, Calcutta, makes a distinctly thought-provoking study of *The Life and Teachings of Buddha*. Dr. Basak has earned a considerable name as an erudite scholar in Ancient Indian History, with an intimate knowledge of the original sources both in Sanskrit and Pali. The article will be concluded in our next. . . .

Sri Jagdish Sahai, M.A., a new and welcome contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*,



reinterprets the supreme value of religion not only to the individual but also to society in a manner helpful to the solution of the problems of modern man. Religion, in its purest form, cleansed of all non-essential accretions, becomes the *Religion of Man*—the greatest saving factor of civilizations. . . .

Intuitive knowledge of Reality is direct, immediate, and non-relational. *Higher Immediacy*—in other words, *aparokṣānubhūti*—is the unmediated and intimate realization of the Absolute Truth, when the self is conscious of itself not through the intervention of anything forming the not-self. Prof. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., of the University of Saugor, writing with massive erudition, investigates the structure of this branch of Vedānta epistemology, relating his conclusions to the well-known authorities on the subject.

### THE CONCEPT OF MAN

The need for a better and fuller knowledge of man has become imperative today. The mighty events in world history since the turn of the century have focussed attention on the importance of the individual in relation to society and the State. But there has been a noticeable proclivity towards justifying the urgency of the economic, political, and commercial aspects of life, isolating, at the same time, the moral and spiritual ends and values that in fact give direction to human activities. The sciences of inorganic and inert matter have progressed more rapidly than the science of life itself. The impact of science on society has its great advantages as well as disadvantages. It appears as though man is perplexed by the enormity of his own inventions and creations and finds himself a stranger in the world he has sought to improve. The anomalies of human movement have, therefore, awakened sensitive and progressive minds everywhere to an awareness of the true concept of man.

The East, more especially India, has always put emphasis on the spiritual and divine nature of man's inner being, while the

West is intent on pursuing life's objectives with a materialistic and mechanistic conception of man. Though 'unity in variety' is the plan of creation, any undue stress on divergent concepts such as the 'purely Eastern' or the 'exclusively Western' cannot go far in establishing the kind of world understanding and peace we all so anxiously want to establish. The time has come for a harmonious synthesis of all that is best and noblest, whether it is of the East or of the West. Humanity's attention has to be turned from everything that divides man from man. The disrespect shown to human personality merely on racial, national, or religious grounds can never be condemned too strongly. It is all the more deplorable when such atrocious racial or religious discrimination is practised by those who consider themselves civilized and progressive.

In the course of his Address to the inaugural session of the U.N.E.S.C.O. symposium on 'The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and West', held at New Delhi some months back, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad analysed, with remarkable felicity, the Eastern and Western concepts of man. Referring to the various concepts about man and nature in different countries, he observed:

'There are many points in common between the views of philosophers in the East and the West but there is one distinction in emphasis between India, Greece, and China which strikes us from the very beginning of recorded history. In India, the emphasis of philosophy has, on the whole, been on the inner experience of man. Philosophers here have sought to understand man's inner nature, and in this pursuit have gone beyond the regions of sense, intellect, and even reason and sought to assert the identity of man with a deep hidden Reality. In Greece, the philosopher has been interested mainly in understanding the nature of the world outside. He has sought to determine the place of man in the outer world. His view has therefore been, on the whole, more extrovert than in India. In China, on the other hand, philosophers have not worried about the inner nature of man nor about external Nature but concentrated on the study of man in relation to his fellows. These differences in orientation have exerted a profound influence on



later developments of philosophy in each of these regions. We find, therefore, that there are striking differences in their respective concepts of man'.

Making a healthy comparison between the views held by the scholars of the West and those held by the seers of India and the East, and elaborating the Vedantic concept of man, Maulana Azad said:

'In course of time a materialistic and scientific temper became the pervasive outlook of the West. We find a culmination of this development in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Darwin sought to establish that man is descended from animals while Marx argued that his mentality is largely the resultant of his material environment. Freud in the twentieth century went a step further and taught that not only is man descended from animals, but his mentality retains even today traces of his animal origin.

'As opposed to this conception of man as a progressive animal, we find in the East a completely different concept of man. The East has from the very beginning emphasized man's intrinsic spirituality. The contemplation of the inner reality of man gave rise to the philosophy of Vedanta in India and Sufism in Arabia. This spiritual concept of man has deeply influenced the mentality of man throughout the East and is not unknown even in the West. According to this outlook, we cannot understand the essence of man if we regard him as only a material entity. The real nature of man can be understood only if we conceive of him as an emanation of God. There was in Eastern philosophy a strong pantheistic strain. In different schools of Indian philosophy, all things are regarded as expressions of God's being but even then man belongs to a special category. For he is the highest manifestation of God's being.

'Similarly we find that according to the Sufis, man is a wave of the boundless sea that is God. He is a ray of the sun that is God. Man can regard himself as different from the Eternal Being only so long as his vision is clouded by the evil of ignorance. Once there is enlightenment, all these distinctions dissolve and man recognizes himself as a moment in the being of the Eternal.

'It will be readily agreed that there can be no higher concept of man. God marks the highest limit of human thought. By identifying man with God, the Eastern concept of man elevates him to godhead. Man has therefore no other goal but to re-establish his identity with God. He thus becomes superior to the entire creation'.

Pointing out the beneficent results that would follow from a true synthesis of both

the Eastern and the Western concepts of man and reiterating the need for achieving such a synthesis before long by evolving a suitable course of education, Maulana Azad observed:

'The Eastern conception of man's status, if combined with the Western concept of progress, would open out to man the possibility of infinite advance without the risks implicit in the misuse of science. . . . The Eastern conception of man's status is not only consistent with the progress of Western science, but in fact offers an intelligible explanation of how scientific progress is possible. If man were merely a developed animal, there would be a limit to his advancement. If however, he shares in God's infinity, there can be no limit to the progress he can achieve. Science can then march from triumph to triumph and solve many of the riddles which trouble man even to this day.

'There is a further reason why a synthesis of the Eastern and the Western concepts of man is of the greatest importance to man's future. Science in itself is neutral. Its discoveries can be used equally to heal and to kill. It depends upon the outlook and mentality of the user whether science will be used to create a new heaven on earth or to destroy the world in a common conflagration. If we think of man as only a progressive animal, there is nothing to prevent his using science for furthering interests based on the passions he shares in common with animals. If, however, we think of him as an emanation of God, he can use science only for furthering God's purposes, that is the achievement of peace on earth and goodwill to all men'.

That such a wholesome synthesis of the East and the West was the great desideratum of our age was clearly pointed out by Swami Vivekananda over five decades ago. The Swami had said:

'This world of ours is on the plan of the division of labour. It is vain to say that one man shall possess everything. A nation which is great in the possession of material power thinks that that is all that is to be coveted, that that is all that is meant by progress, that that is all that is meant by civilization. On the other hand, another nation may think that mere material civilization is utterly useless. From the Orient came the voice which once told the world that if a man possesses everything that is under the sun and does not possess spirituality,



what avails it? This is the Oriental type, the other is the Occidental type. Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. The Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. For a complete civilization the world is waiting,

waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race'.

There is no doubt that the world is gradually moving in this direction and that the forces of unity and synthesis are slowly but steadily gaining ground notwithstanding the apparent conflicts and turmoil on the surface.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE SERPENT POWER.** BY ARTHUR AVALON.  
*Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras), Ltd., Madras 17. Pages 668. Price Rs. 25 or £ 2.*

Sir John Woodroffe, eminent jurist and profound scholar, who is the well-known author of many books, especially of the series of valuable publications on Tantra Shāstra under the pseudonym 'Arthur Avalon', needs no introduction to the literate circle. It can safely be affirmed that it was his great and untiring efforts that inaugurated a revival in the modern study of Tāntrika literature which occupies an important place in the religious life of India. His illuminating works make it abundantly clear that the massive literature bearing on this undoubtedly difficult subject is by no means any 'magical or meaningless superstition'—as it has been supposed to be—but an intricate and comprehensive system which has exercised a healthy and powerful influence on the religious and philosophical concepts of a civilized and enlightened people. These writings of Sir John Woodroffe have not only dispelled the mystery and misconceptions that surround the theory and practice of the Tantras but also awakened a genuine regard for and interest in the greatness of this branch of Indian thought. The book under review occupies a high rank among the books of its class and offers to the English-knowing public, in rich and lucid language, an amazing amount of knowledge on an otherwise abstruse subject which is none the less a direct and efficient means for the realization of the Supreme. As is well known, this book was first published nearly thirty-four years ago in England and soon after in India too. The Indian Publishers deserve hearty congratulations from every lover of the subject on their publication of the present (fourth) edition of the book. (The first edition of the book had been adequately reviewed in these columns in our issue for July 1920).

This work is a description and explanation in fuller detail of the 'Serpent Power' (*kuṇḍalī-śakti*) and the Yoga effected through it, a subject occupy-

ing a pre-eminent place in the Tantra Shāstra. The volume contains an elaborate General Introduction, in itself an important work of much erudition. Then come the complete and lucid English translations, with very useful explanatory Notes, both by the author, of two recondite Sanskrit works, the first called *Ṣaṭ-cakra-nirūpaṇa* ('Description of and Investigation into the Six Bodily Centres'), by the great Tāntrik Purnānanda, and the second entitled *Pādukā-pañcaka* ('Fivefold Footstool of the Guru'), along with the English translations of the respective Commentaries on the two works by Kālicharana—each verse of the main work being followed by the commentary on it. The former work, containing 56 verses in all and dealing with the process of spiritual realization—*ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda* (piercing of the six Chakras)—as is laid down in the Tantras, forms the sixth chapter of *Śrī-tattva-cintāmaṇi*, an extensive work on Tantrik ritual by Purnananda. The latter work, containing only 8 verses, deals with one of the Chakras (or Lotuses) described in the former. The volume also contains, in the pages following the English part of it, the Sanskrit text (in Devanāgarī) of the above-mentioned two works; with the Commentaries, here translated, and also of *Ṣaṭ-cakra-vivṛti*—a Commentary by Vishwanātha on the *Ṣaṭ-cakra-nirūpaṇa*.

In his learned and exhaustive Introduction, covering over 300 pages and comprising seven chapters, the author presents a summary account of the principles upon which rest Yoga in general and Kundalini Yoga in particular, with special reference to the subject-matter of the texts translated. In other words, it contains a lucid description and explanation of the Kundalini Shakti or Supreme Power in the human body by the arousing of which the Yoga is achieved. (*Kuṇḍala* means 'coiled'; *Kuṇḍalini* means the power or Goddess that lies coiled, whose form is that of a coiled and sleeping serpent. Hence the author has called his work *Serpent Power*).

The volume contains eight original coloured



plates of the Chakras and nine half-tone plates, taken from life, showing some positions in Kundalini Yoga. The printing and get-up of the book are very good and it is bound in full cloth and gilt.

#### ENGLISH-BENGALI

VIDYAMANDIR PATRIKA. *Published by the Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, P.O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah (West Bengal). Pages 110.*

This sumptuous, illustrated annual number (1951) of the Organ of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira provides a rich and varied literary repast,

in keeping with the glorious traditions of the Institution. It contains a large number of well written articles—most of them in Bengali and a few in English—and also poems in Bengali, contributed by the students and the members of the staff. These writings reveal the admirable intellectual verve of the students and their keen and intelligent interest in current topics—educational, cultural, social, and religious. This attractive production bears testimony to the delightful fact that there are some worthy scholars and artists too among the students, in addition to litterateurs. It is a commendable achievement on the part of the students, and we wish them greater success in their devoted effort in the coming years.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAMANDIRA, BELUR (HOWRAH)

#### REPORT FOR 1951-52

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur, Howrah, started in July 1941, has, with the closing of the academic year under report, completed eleven years of its useful and glorious career. It is a residential Intermediate College, situated very close to the Belur Math, teaching both arts (including commerce) and science. During the period under review, there were on the whole (including both the senior and junior classes) 251 students; of these, 205 were in the science section and 46 in the arts section. The teaching staff numbered 24, of whom 4 were monastic members of the Order. In addition, the two hostels, accommodating the students, were under the supervision of monastic wardens.

The admirable results of the university examination reveal a commendable performance on the part of the students, who have ably maintained the traditional high standards of the Vidyamandira in this respect. Of the 85 boys sent up for the Intermediate Examination of the Calcutta University, 73 came out successful—62 in the science section and 11 in the arts section, thus scoring over 85 per cent passes. Special mention has to be made of the fact that in the science section two boys secured the third and fourth places in the University, and in the arts section one boy secured the tenth place. Moreover, altogether six boys obtained meritorious scholarships.

The Vidyamandira possesses a well-stocked library and a common room. Tutorial classes are regularly held in all subjects. In addition to academic education, the students are provided with facilities for extra-mural activities—physical, social, literary, and religious—for the harmonious development of their

character and personality. During the year, a small hospital building, attached to the Vidyamandira hostels, has been completed and a whole-time medical officer looks after the health and physical fitness of the students. The Vidyamandira needs funds—to help poor but meritorious students by admitting them as free students; to complete the present incomplete hostel building; and for the construction of another hostel and a gymnasium.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, CALICUT

#### REPORT FOR 1948 AND 1949

The following is a brief summary of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Calicut, Malabar, for the years 1948 and 1949:

*Religious:* The Sevashrama has an attached shrine where daily worship, Bhajana, and Sankirtana are conducted. Religious classes are held every week and *Gita* is taught daily to the inmates of its Students' Home. Public lectures are also organized in the Sevashrama. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Buddha, Christ, and other saints and prophets are also observed.

*Educational:* The Sevashrama conducts a free Elementary School, with a strength of about 200 pupils, and a free Students' Home for boys of poor and backward communities, most of whom are orphans. Its present strength is 34. There are also a Higher Elementary School for the boys of the Students' Home, with 32 students on its rolls at present, and a free Reading Room and Library for the public.

*Medical:* In 1948 a new building, at a cost of about Rs. 5,000, was constructed for the dispensary. The dispensary treated 62,739 cases in 1948 of which 13,122 were new cases, and 73,887 in 1949 of which 14,986 were new.



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE ADVENT

*Tānīd-ahāni bahulānyāsan-yā prācīnam-uditā sūryasya,  
Yatah pari jāra ivācaranty-uṣo dadṛkṣe na punar-yatīva.*

And those fading roses of the promised Morns:

What an endless array of dead desires  
They strewed along the Path,  
Till at long last rose the Sun  
On the horizon of my aching Hopes!

And then, O lovely Dawn,  
Like a coy maiden  
Hovering around her Lover,  
Thou wert seen . . . seen at last!

And thou art not turning back, art thou?  
Falters the trembling Heart.

—*Maitrāvaruṇir Vasiṣṭha (Rg-Veda, VII. 76.3)*  
(Translated by Anirvan)

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## THE PARROT AND THE MONK

Without—torrents of monsoon rain and lightning. Within—red flames and pungent smoke of a wood fire.

The boy, Shivaprasad, was listening casually to a group of men who chatted together, but when one of them began telling of a pilgrimage over innumerable miles and across the great snow-fields to Mount Kailas, the holy abode of Shiva and Umā, he listened eagerly, asked a hundred questions, and in the end set his heart on an immediate journey to Kailas.

A few months later the boy was already returning from the *tīrtha* (holy place). Trudging along the hot, dusty road, he noticed neither the bright fruit of near-by trees nor the sparkle of wayside streams. Slow-moving pilgrims passed, but he did not see them. If his face was sad, what shall we say of his young heart? Oh, the unutterable pain! He had indeed been to Kailas, but in that holy mountain had not found the Lord. So he was thinking: 'Is there really a God? And religion—is it to be trusted?' Soon he said to himself: 'Perhaps I have been deceived—perhaps life in the world isn't so bad after all'.

At this moment Shivaprasad came upon an old monk and, out of habit, saluted him. 'What does this mean, child?' asked the old man. 'Such a sad face! Yet you are evidently returning from God's own dwelling'. 'How can one say so?' cried the boy. 'Is there a God? And if so, where is He? Holy books, Sadhus, sacred rites, pilgrimages—I have taken help of all—but still cannot find Him'. 'Is it so, my son?' said the monk quietly. 'Do not be discouraged—I know that God is within. Until you discover Him there, you will never find Him outside. Come, let us travel together and I shall tell you a story'. Thus, as they journeyed onward, the old monk related the following:

'In ancient days an aged Baniya (grocer)

named Ram Sharan lived in a small village by the Ganges. Every day he bathed in the sacred river, and afterwards chanted the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulasidas. While he did this his green parrot, Mitoo, would always sit near with tilted head, listening attentively.

'Because Ram Sharan was exceedingly proud of Mitoo, he bought a fine red ring to go round his neck and even talked with him frequently. Then he taught Mitoo to utter the name of Rama (the Lord), and the bird became very skilful in the practice.

'One day when Ram Sharan was preparing to visit a neighbouring saint, Mitoo said: "Since you are going to the holy man, pray ask him why I am not released from bondage. Though the scriptures say that whoever chants the name of Rama will be free, and though I am for ever taking His name, yet here I am still bound and making no progress".

'When Ram Sharan had completed the journey and returned, he was greeted by Mitoo, who patiently waited until the Baniya had eaten his dinner before questioning him.

' "Master, what answer have you brought me?" he finally asked. Poor Ram Sharan! There was nothing to do but tell the truth: though he had put the question, the holy man had only sat quietly, without replying.

'The next morning the Baniya found the parrot lying on the bottom of its cage, dead. With a sad heart he carried it to a green hollow beneath a tree, where he stroked its bright plumage for the last time, said a beautiful prayer, and then covered it with fresh clusters of leaves.

'No sooner had he done so, however, than Mitoo came to life and flew to a high bough.

' "Ah, Mitoo, Mitoo!" cried Ram Sharan, who was both pleased and disappointed. "Why did you deceive me? Or how, being dead, could you return to life?"

' "My beloved master, is it possible you do not know that the holy one really sent a



wonderful answer?" said Mitoo. "You told me that in reply to my question he only sat silent. This indicated to me that freedom cannot be gained by merely repeating the holy name, that it is also necessary to control the sense organs and to absorb them in the *prāṇa* (vital force). I understood further that I must dissolve the *prāṇa* into the mind, and then with the mind thus concentrated, repeat the name of Rama; that only in this way can Rama's blessed name help in gaining freedom.

"You see, I had heard you recite this teaching from the holy books many times, but I did not know I should practise it while repeating the Lord's name. When you told me that the holy one remained silent in answer to my question, I understood what he meant, and I began to practise it at once ;

but you thought me dead, opened my cage, and so set me free!"

When the old monk had finished the story, he spoke no further. All his attention was upon the now shining face of Shivaprasad, who soon said farewell at a cross-road and continued homeward.

Many years later a much-loved Sadhu in a monastery of Banaras attained to the Luminous Presence, the Everlasting Peace. By that time even the memory of the old monk had disappeared from the earth, so there was no one to recognize in the Sadhu the boy who had almost given up the Great Quest on the road from Mount Kailas, but who had learned—yes, even from a green parrot—the way to liberation.

## THE SUBLIME SYNTHESIS OF INDIAN THOUGHT

BY THE EDITOR

*Ekam sad-viprā bahudhā vadanti*

'Truth is One; Sages call it by various names'.

—*Rg-Veda*, I. 164. 46

It is a truism which will however bear repetition that the most essential characteristic of Indian civilization is spirituality. The bond of unity in Indian society is not race or language but religion. In India, from the dawn of history, religion or the quest for spiritual values has been the salient feature of life and thought. The Hindu view of life has always laid stress on the divinity of man, unity of existence, and the harmony of religions and creeds. Absolute spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*) represents the highest aim of man and is sought to be attained by positive life-affirmation and the cultivation of a spiritual world-view. In spite of the manifold vicissitudes in the sphere of her political and social life, India has stood before the world as the

living embodiment of a sublime and synthetic culture which has sustained the vital currents of men's thought and activity in every part of the world. Nowhere does this idea of unity in variety find a more eloquent expression than in the growth and development of Indian thought. It is the proud privilege of this ancient land of Bharata to have given birth to the world's most enduring civilization based on the grand synthesis of the highest practicality with the widest catholicity and the profoundest spirituality.

The sages and seers of India long ago discovered and expounded the twofold path of the Vedic religion, leading man to the attainment of all-round prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and supreme spiritual well-being (*nihśreyasa*).



To the Indian mind, man is neither a luckless sinner nor a human brute, but a pre-eminent-divine being whose welfare consists in ordering life in such a way as to lead to the re-awakening of his potential, non-material powers and the integration of his personality. The Spirit has to be dissociated from its false identity with the physical and mental adjuncts and man should be enabled to realize its real and high status of supremacy over everything material. The originators of Indian philosophic thought and discipline had duly recognized the craving of the human heart for that peace and bliss which are eternal and by attaining which man seeks nothing beyond. In short, the ultimate goal of life was, according to them, the realization of the Highest Truth, the superconscious awareness of the Supreme Reality that pervades and interpenetrates everything everywhere, by breaking through all physical barriers and natural limitations. It meant complete conquest of Nature, both internal and external.

From time immemorial Hindu philosophers have sought to proclaim to the entire world the magnificent discoveries they made from time to time in the field of human thought. The Vedas, which form the world's oldest scriptures and which may be said to constitute the source of the religion and philosophy of India, are not mere books as such, but the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different seers and truth-seekers at different times. The Vedic Rishis of old, as also Krishna, Buddha, Lao-tsze, Socrates, Jesus Christ, and such other world teachers, gave to humanity the results of their researches in what knowledge mankind possesses of philosophy and metaphysics. These results were the outcome of centuries of human effort and struggle with a view to manifesting the divinity in man. The sum and substance of Indian philosophic thought may be stated in brief as follows: Man is rooted in the Spirit which is omnipotent and omniscient. The soul of man is divine, and though apparently experienced as being held in bondage, it is in fact deathless and also birthless. It is im-

mortal, though it dwells in the body that is mortal. Body and mind are by themselves inert and dull matter and the light and force that make them actively function are at bottom the light and force of the soul (or *Ātman*). This deeper essence in man, nay, in every being—sentient and insentient, has been described by the Vedas as 'the eye of the eye', 'the ear of the ear'; 'That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but by which the eyes see, know That to be the soul'. The ego in man is but a limited expression of this permanent soul, also mentioned variously as Self, *Ātman*, or *Brahman*—the universal substratum of everything created, seen or unseen. It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*) and One without a second (*ekamevādvītiyam*). The supreme perfection is reached when one realizes one's complete identity with or non-difference from the *Ātman* or *Brahman*. The goal is to attain this perfection (*mukti* or *mokṣa*) even before death overtakes the body.

In the face of repeated assertions and expositions, critics are not wanting who are never tired of casting a lurid light on the apparent plurality of religions and diversity of faiths in India. Hinduism has no doubt presented, all through the ages, a variety of forms of worship, of religious faiths and practices, and of conceptions of the Divinity. But the very fact that it could smoothly accommodate numerous religious systems and sects within its broad fold speaks volumes in favour of the catholicity and universality of Hindu thought. It is this religious freedom, combined with a total absence of bigotry or coercion in matters spiritual, that has won a high place of honour and prestige for Hinduism in the hearts of millions of non-Hindus. It is also a significant fact that Hindu converts to other religions are generally seen to be more liberal and less intolerant than most of the original followers of those religions. While followers of some religious faiths have believed and still believe in the efficacy of the exclusive triumph of their own faith and the fanatical persecution of the followers of other faiths, the *Sanātana Dharma* that has moulded the



destinies of the people of India has wrought the greatest miracle in the religious history of the world by creating and ushering in a unique form of unity-in-variety, based on unparalleled catholicity, extraordinary tolerance, and wholesome synthesis. In a world assailed by conflicts and tensions even in the field of religious life, Hindu thought has boldly and rationally accomplished a wonderful harmony and reconciliation among its different schools and creeds.

The Vedas, which form the source of the Vedanta, though making elaborate mention of a multiplicity of gods, characterizing various aspects of Nature, also reveal and emphasize the basic unity underlying the plurality of deities and clearly bring out the idea of the One Supreme Being who has created all beings on earth and in heaven and is immanent in them. In the *Rg-Veda* we find the following prayer: 'Thou, O Indwelling God, dost exist in the hearts of men and gods in the sky, Thou art immanent in all beings of earth and heaven. For a beatific vision, therefore, Thou art the only object of worship'. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* we read: 'The God who exists in fire and water, in herbs and trees and who is immanent in the whole universe—to Him we make our repeated salutations'. There are innumerable such statements that go to confirm the existence of the One Ultimate Principle or Person synthesizing and harmonizing the rich though bewildering variety and multiplicity. This monistic conception of the ultimate entity is borne out by relevant passages throughout the literature of Hindu religious and philosophic thought. 'The One Existent is conceived of as many' (*Ekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti*); 'The One Glory manifests itself in various ways' (*Ekam jyotirbahudhā vibhāti*); 'What is but One wise people call by different names as Agni, Yama, Mātarishvan'; 'As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear,

crooked or straight, all lead to Thee'. The *Gita* too admirably strikes this distinct note of synthesis, where the Lord says, 'All is strung on me as a row of gems on a thread'. The immanent and transcendent unity that underlies the diversity of names and forms, is the origin and support of the universe. It is all-pervading and sustains and knits together all manifested (individual) beings even as the string sustains and links together the gems of a necklace. As Swami Vivekananda declared in his Address on Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion'.

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe and the powerful and keen Hindu genius recognized this significant fact and made ample allowance for it. Unlike some other religions, Hinduism laid down no fixed dogmas or rigidly sectarian rituals to be compulsorily believed in and followed by one and all. The Hindus do not consider that man is travelling from error to truth and that consequently the 'sinner' or the 'unbeliever' has to be 'saved' from eternal punishment in hell. To the Hindu, every soul is, in its very essence, free, pure, and perfect and is progressively gathering more and more strength by travelling from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. That Hinduism really is not any one particular religion or creed but a veritable 'parliament of religions', a galaxy of universal truths and spiritual realizations reflecting every aspect of whatever is highest and noblest in the life of humanity, has been elucidated by scholars and writers of the East and the West. 'In Hinduism', says Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'the descriptions of the Supreme are many-sided and comprehensive. A catholic religion expresses itself in a variety of forms and comprehends all the relations which exist between man and God. Some



of the great religions of the world select one or the other of the great relations, exalt it to the highest rank, make it the centre and relate all else to it. They become so intolerant as to ignore the possibility of other relations and insist on one's acceptance of its own point of view as giving the sole right of citizenship in the spiritual world. But Hinduism provides enough freedom for a man to go forward and develop along his own characteristic lines. . . . Our conception of God answers to the level of our mind and interests. Hinduism admits that religion cannot be compressed within any juridical system or reduced to any one single doctrine. The different creeds mark out the way of the Spirit. Religious life has to be built through their aid'.

The key-note of Indian civilization is essentially spiritual in character. The sublime synthesis of Indian thought is marked not by any dull, drab, mechanical uniformity but by an orchestrated symphony in which each and every note plays its individual part, at the same time contributing to the general harmony. It is therefore nothing strange that to the Hindu, the whole world of religions is but a progressive coming up of different persons, with varying endowments and aptitudes, through various conditions and circumstances, to the one ultimate goal. As the roots of Indian culture rest deep in the foundations of human evolution, it has been growing for centuries, nay, ages, and is still a vital compact organism with an infinite capacity to assimilate and expand, though at times appearing somewhat non-pragmatic and inflexible. Writes Monier Williams: 'It may with truth be asserted that no description of Hinduism can be exhaustive which does not touch on almost every religious and philosophical idea that the world has ever known. Starting from the Veda, Hinduism has ended in embracing something from all religions, and in presenting phases suited to all minds. It is all-tolerant, all-compliant, all-comprehensive, all-absorbing. It has its spiritual and its material aspect, its esoteric and exoteric, its subjective and objective, its rational and irra-

tional, its pure and its impure. It may be compared to a huge polygon, or irregular multilateral figure. It has one side for the practical, another for the severely moral, another for the devotional and imaginative, another for the sensuous and sensual, and another for the philosophical and speculative. Those who rest in ceremonial observances find it all-sufficient; those who deny the efficacy of works, and make faith the one requisite, need not wander from its pale; those who are addicted to sensual objects may have their tastes gratified; those who delight in meditating on the nature of God and man, the relation of matter and Spirit, the mystery of separate existence, and the origin of evil, may here indulge their love of speculation'. If, however, it is seen that Hinduism today is not a sufficiently living force in the life of the majority of its followers, the fault surely lies with the latter who have chosen to let their energies be absorbed by secular or communal activities, oblivious of the glorious traditions of their Sanatana Dharma.

It is the unashamed affirmation of a trite falsehood to say that the Hindu seers were unpractical visionaries, forgetful of the interests and welfare of life, or that Hinduism countenanced inequitable and unjust discrimination in society. Except under the pressure of contributory extraneous causes, India was never known to have been unprogressively static or obstinately conservative. Nor is it correct to say that the Hindu religion favoured, much less encouraged, social disparity between man and man. Since Hindu social organization is based on the fundamental assumption of the supremacy of Spirit over matter, and of moral values over material advantages or worldly ambitions, the glorification of the hedonistic pleasure-principle as the goal of existence is considered undesirable for the welfare of either the individual or the community. Wealth and pleasure which relate exclusively to the body and the senses become a secondary thing, and even political, economic, and aesthetic pursuits come in only as a means to the achievement of the spiritual



end, viz. perfection through God realization. The struggle to become perfect, become divine, and attain that Supreme Knowledge by knowing which everything else becomes known, constitutes the leit-motif of the individual's philosophy of life. Not being satisfied with the limited happiness derived through the finite consciousness of one's body and senses, the individual aspirant seeks the ultimate of happiness through universal consciousness of and spiritual identity with the entire cosmic movement. Barring the stray cases of narrowness and bigotry of individuals and groups,—no less condemned by Hindu teachers than by others—the different but complementary religious systems within the fold of Hinduism have among them not only not created any inherent conflicts or tensions but also got a distinct consciousness of an essential spiritual unity. Each system is great in its own place, while all of them associate enthusiastically in making the integral synthesis all the sweeter and more exquisite.

By its insistence on the spiritual view of society as an organic whole, Indian civilization has upheld the true principles of democracy, so far as the essential values of life are concerned. For, thereby, it has recognized that every soul has in it something transcendently supreme and yet inherently intimate which removes disparity and distinction between man and man in the presence of the Divine and makes everyone equally eligible for spiritual freedom and immortality. The Vedantic religion emphasizes the divinity of every being—man, woman, or child—irrespective of caste, creed, or rank, and aims at leading the individual towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety. 'To the student of Oriental history', writes Sister Nivedita, 'it appears equally clear that the history of Asia is that of a single living organism, of which India may be taken as the heart and focus. Regarded thus, in relation to its surroundings, the culture to which we give the name of Indian thought becomes likewise a unity, as clear, as continuous, as consistent in its deve-

lopment as is the evolution of the scientific idea in the West. Considered as an appanage of Europe, India is meaningless; taken in and for herself, and for that to which she rightly belongs, it need not surprise us if we find her the essential factor of human advance in the future as in the past'. The strong and stable synthesis of the spiritual experiences of three hundred million people for over seven thousand years, which finds eloquent expression in the tenets of the Vedanta, is, amazingly enough, neither sentimental nor fanatical.

In every age, in India, spiritual luminaries have demonstrated and proclaimed—not merely in words but in actual practice also—this essential spiritual synthesis of philosophic thought and unity of mystic realizations. In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna declared: 'Whosoever comes to Me through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me'. Buddha, with his great heart and wonderful humanizing power, again proclaimed the message of synthesis and harmony by reiterating and reinterpreting the Vedic religion in a manner best suited to the age. In recent times, Sri Ramakrishna has once more proclaimed—and that in the most authoritative and intelligible manner—the fundamental unity underlying all religions. In his life and teachings one finds unerring and conclusive evidence of the sublime synthesis of Indian thought. 'Various are the paths', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'that lead to the Ocean of Immortality. . . . Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God'. He re-emphasized the distinctively Vedantic idea of universality and non-difference by declaring, 'As many faiths so many paths', and calling a truce to all conflicts and dissensions among the followers of different religions. His name stands as another word for the synthesis of all possible ideals and all possible shades of thought.

Today the great religions of humanity and the different currents of thought in the world have mingled together on the memorable soil of India. The rest of mankind is looking towards India for a fresh spiritual revival and



moral resurgence in order that the profound consequences of such a revival and resurgence may serve to re-establish the lost balance in human relations. The grand synthesis and universalism of the Vedanta is indispensable to the modern world, including India, especially at the present moment when religious bigotry on the one hand and rank secularism on the other have discredited the fair name *Homo sapiens*. The world situation requires not a surrender of the basic spiritual principles to the forces of aggressive evil but a reaffirma-

tion and readjustment of them in a spirit of utmost toleration as that of the humble poet who sang: 'May He who is worshipped as Shiva by the Shaivites, as Brahman by the Vedantins, as Buddha by the Buddhists, as Kartā (chief agent) by the Naiyāyikas (logicians) versed in reasoning, as Arhat by those (Jainas) who are devoted to the teachings of the Jinas, as Karma by the Mimāmsakas (ritualists),—may that Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, fulfil our desires'.

## THE CONCEPT OF MAN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

BY DR. S. K. MAITRA

Sometime ago the UNESCO arranged a symposium on 'The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West' as part of its programme for the establishment of a cultural unity of the East and the West. There is no doubt that nothing brings out more clearly the difference between the outlooks of the East and the West than their views on the nature of Man. At the same time, as the UNESCO directive on the subject of this symposium has warned us, it is possible to exaggerate this difference and present the two outlooks in such a way as to make it impossible to find a common denominator between them.

We have to steer clear, therefore, of both the extremes—the extreme of looking upon the Eastern and Western outlooks as absolute irreconcilables, and the other extreme of a complacent view which sees no essential difference between the two. To treat the two as being the same is to do injustice to both, and what is worse, it is to ignore the great truth which the history of the evolution of human thought has taught us, namely, that it has developed through successive contacts between the East

and the West. If the Eastern outlook had been the same as the Western, then such contact would, from the point of view of the development of human thought, have been useless. For contact, to be of any value, must be a contact of two different. I therefore agree with Dr. Northrop who, in an article contributed to the volume *Radhakrishnan*, published by George Allen & Unwin, in celebration of the sixtieth birthday of that distinguished philosopher, states that the relation between Eastern and Western philosophy is properly expressed by the symbol  $E+W$ , and not by the equation  $E=W$ . In the contact of the East and the West both have something of their own to contribute, and it is this which has enriched the culture of both.

This view alone enables us to understand how it is profitable for the East to study the standpoint of the West, and *vice versa*. If the two standpoints were identical, it would be superfluous to make such a study. If, on the other hand, they were diametrically opposed to each other, it would be absolutely impossible to make such a study. If we therefore believe that it is profitable for the



East to learn from the West and *vice versa*, then we must accept the position that the standpoints of the East and the West, though different, are not irreconcilable.

With these prefatory remarks, let us try to understand how the concept of man has been developed respectively in the East and the West, and how far a synthesis of their standpoints in respect of this concept is possible, and if so, what gain it would be for mankind. One preliminary remark I have to make here. In what I have to say in the sequel about the Eastern view, I shall confine myself to the Indian view. This is partly due to personal grounds, for I feel that I am not sufficiently familiar with Chinese or Japanese or Persian or Arabian or other non-Indian systems of philosophy in the East to be able to speak about them with confidence. It is partly also due to the feeling that if I am to discuss the standpoints of these various non-Indian philosophical systems, the scope of this paper will become unmanageably wide.

Coming now to what may be called broadly—I say ‘broadly’ because in spite of differences among different schools of Indian thought, there are certain broad features which are common to all of them—the Indian conception of man, we find that stress is laid upon the spiritual side of man. Man is only truly man, according to the Indian conception of him, when he is a seeker after spiritual values, especially the highest value, namely, salvation. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Maitreyi, the wife of Yājñavalkya, remarks, when her husband expresses his desire to divide his earthly possessions between her and her co-wife and retire to the forest, ‘What shall I do with that which does not give me immortality?’, thereby clearly indicating that immortality is the goal of man. In a verse in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (XI. 20. 12) it is said that even the dwellers in heaven long for the human body, for it is only in the human body, with the help of knowledge and devotion, that emancipation can be obtained. In another verse of the same *Purāṇa* (XI. 20. 17) it is said that he who, having obtained the human

body, cannot obtain salvation, is a slayer of himself. Innumerable quotations like these may be given to show that what Indian culture values in man is his spiritual capacity, especially his capacity for obtaining salvation.

But earthly life is not considered a bar to the attainment of salvation. On the contrary, the *Īśopaniṣad* expressly lays down that one should not shirk one’s duty and should wish for a life of one hundred years (2). Not only that, but, as another verse of the same Upaniṣad says, if to worship the world of multiplicity is falling into darkness, to escape from the world of multiplicity in an attempt to make a short cut to salvation is falling into still greater darkness (9). The *Gita* also urges very strongly the necessity of performing one’s duties. It makes a beautiful synthesis of asceticism and worldly life. Provided one performs one’s worldly duties in a spirit of complete detachment, keeping one’s ego completely in the background, there is no reason why one should not obtain salvation (*Gita*, III. 19). It gives the example of King Janaka to illustrate its standpoint that the attainment of the highest perfection is quite compatible with the performance of one’s worldly duties (III. 20.) Not only that, but the *Gita* says that salvation cannot be obtained by the renunciation of work (III. 4). What is wanted is the cultivation of a spirit of non-attachment (*anāsakti*). A man is to be called a hypocrite, the *Gita* says, if he outwardly rejects work but inwardly cherishes selfish desires. The usual view that the East has a contempt for the world and advocates escapism, while it may be true of the philosophy of some systems, such as Buddhism, is not true of the general standpoint of Indian philosophy. That standpoint is better represented by the philosophy of the *Gita* than the world-renouncing philosophy of Buddhism. As a matter of fact, Buddhism had ultimately to leave the shores of India because of its negative attitude towards worldly life. The negative attitude towards the world, therefore, cannot be treated as representing the general standpoint of Indian philosophy. But the stress which it



lays upon the spiritual side of life, the over emphasis on which resulted in the negative attitude, gives the key-note of Indian philosophy. That Moksha or salvation is the goal of human life and that all other ideals are to be treated as subordinate to it, may be regarded as the essential note of our culture. But it is necessary to distinguish things which ought to be distinguished. The practical unanimity with which this idea is advocated in all systems of Indian philosophy must not make us draw from it the wrong conclusion that Indian philosophy is negative in its attitude towards this world.

It is not true, therefore, to say that the East stands for a negative attitude towards the world. Once the idea that the culture of the East is world-renouncing is definitely rejected, the way will be prepared for a reconciliation between the East and the West, for the West decidedly stands for the affirmation of the world. It is really on the question of what values are to be pursued that the difference between the Eastern and the Western outlook is brought out clearly, and not upon the question of the affirmation or negation of the world. The real question at issue between the East and the West is: What values are to be considered essential for man, the pursuit of which gives him his distinctive characteristic? It is the old, old controversy between Socrates and Protagoras in a new form. For both these philosophers man is the measure of all things, for although Socrates criticizes Protagoras for holding this view, his own view may be said to be also the same, for does he not hold that the universal element in man, his reason, is the measure of all things? They differ, however, *toto caelo* about what constitutes the essence of man. Whereas for Protagoras it is the sensuous part of man which constitutes his essence, for Socrates, on the other hand, it is his rational part—that part which enables him to grasp the universal. When Plato makes Socrates say, 'If man is the measure of all things, why not the pig?', he means by man the sensuous man. What Plato wants to point out is that so far as their

sensuous perception is concerned, there is no vital distinction between a man and a pig. Their difference emerges when we take into account the rational part of man. It is reason which constitutes the essence of man, and the function of reason is to grasp the universal. Both Socrates and Protagoras are humanists,<sup>1</sup> but the humanism of the one differs radically from that of the other.

It is of course not our view that the standpoint of the East coincides with that of Socrates or that of the West with that of Protagoras. But the example of Socrates and Protagoras will enable us to understand how two divergent outlooks have for their origin two divergent conceptions of the nature of man. The West more or less holds to the pragmatic view of the nature of man, that is to say, it takes as the measure of his value his utility to society. The East, while not ignoring this, feels that this is not his sole value or even his chief value, but that his true value lies in the realization of salvation. The traditional standpoint with regard to salvation is that of individual salvation, but there was a departure from it even in ancient times in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where salvation was understood in the cosmic sense as meaning the salvation of the entire human race. The idea of cosmic salvation has been made one of the main principles of his philosophy by Sri Aurobindo, who has stressed it more strongly than any other philosopher, either in the East or in the West, but this idea also runs through the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi. But apart from these exceptions, the traditional Indian conception of salvation has been individualistic. The Western standpoint here is undoubtedly more cosmic. As I have said elsewhere, 'Western philosophy, although it does not speak of such a highly spiritual end as salvation, yet takes a universal or cosmic standpoint with regard to whatever it puts forward as the goal of life. The

<sup>1</sup> Socrates also transcends the standpoint of humanism if the conception of the idea of good is ascribed to him, as is done by Plato.



hedonist end, for instance, of "the greatest good of the greatest number" may not be any spiritual end at all, but it has reference to the whole of mankind and not merely to an individual. On this point we really have to take our hats off to the West. The problem is to combine the spiritual standpoint of the East with the cosmic standpoint of the West'. Thanks to Sri Aurobindo and other leaders of Indian thought, the East has already begun to realize the mistake of taking a top individualistic standpoint. The West also, as a result of the last two World Wars, is slowly learning to appreciate the need of spiritual values. There is every hope, therefore, of a rapprochement between the East and the West here, and the world will be distinctly a gainer by it.

One value the West has emphasized more strongly than the East, and that is the value of freedom. Not that the East is indifferent to it. But it does not value freedom from external control so much as freedom from the domination of feelings, sentiments, and passions. A text of Manu (*Manusamhitā*, XII. 91) speaks of the goal of human life as the acquisition of the power of seeing oneself in all beings and all beings in oneself (*sarvabhūteṣu cātmanāṁ sarvabhūtāni cātmani*), which means complete freedom from all passions and prejudices which separate man from man. The *Gita* also emphasizes *samatva*, or a perfectly balanced mind, not swayed by desires and passions, as the goal of human endeavour. It is really very doubtful whether mere freedom from external control, which is the Western conception of freedom, is of much value, unless it is accompanied by freedom in our Indian sense. The Western conception of freedom merely gives the formal condition of morality; that is to say, without it there cannot be any talk of any moral life for man. But it does not give any concrete content to that moral life. For that the Indian conception of freedom is necessary. It is essential that we should realize that freedom is not something negative but something positive. On its positive side, freedom means the reali-

zation of man's spiritual life. A man is free in proportion as he realizes his spiritual life. A recognition of this we find in Kant when he speaks of freedom as meaning rational freedom, that is, conformity to the principle of reason. But it is obscured by his other conception of freedom, which makes it merely equivalent to freedom from nature-necessity. But the Indian conception of freedom is something higher than even the Kantian idea of rational freedom, for it means transcendence even of the life of reason. For the realization of the complete spiritual life it is necessary even to transcend reason. But for our present purpose it is not necessary to dilate on the difference between the two. What we want to point out is that the overlooking of the positive meaning of freedom and stressing only its negative meaning, where it becomes synonymous with the power for doing good as well as evil, leads to a degradation of man and the setting up of a godless society, which is the prime cause of the crisis through which the world is at present passing. Continuously harping on the idea of negative freedom as if it were an end in itself has done incalculable harm to humanity, nay, brought it to the verge of complete annihilation. If, therefore, mankind is to be saved, it is necessary to add to the Western negative conception of freedom the positive conception of it which finds favour in the East. It is the infatuation of science and the purely neutral attitude towards spiritual values which this has engendered, that has so long stood in the way of realizing this simple truth. Negative freedom and the spiritual neutrality of science are in fact almost synonymous terms.

Coming now to the problem of education, this problem is an offshoot of the problem of the nature of man we have discussed above. In fact, slightly varying the famous saying of Fichte about philosophy, we may say that what education a man should have depends upon what sort of man he wants to be. The philosophy of education must therefore vary with the variations in the types of men that are sought to be produced. The types of



men that the East and the West respectively want to produce must therefore colour their respective philosophies of education. The East has always stood for the production of the spiritual man. Its aim has been the highest development of the individual so as to secure for him spiritual bliss. Education therefore in the East partakes of the nature of Yoga: it is education with a view to the attainment of Moksha. We see this very clearly in the instruction of Nārada by Sanat-kumāra as recorded in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Nārada had already learnt all the sciences that had been cultivated in his time. The list of sciences that he had studied is a very formidable one. It included, for example, not only the *R̥g-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sāma-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda*, history, grammar, the science of the worship of the manes, mathematics, logic, politics, but also such occult sciences as astrology and demonology, and such arts as snake-charming, music, and the fine arts. Yet Sanatkumara had no hesitation in saying that all that he had learnt so far was nothing but names.<sup>2</sup> And he showed him the way which would enable him to cross over to the other shore, the shore beyond darkness. The instruction given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the *Gita* has also for its object the attainment by the latter of the highest spiritual bliss, although it is distinctly pointed out that the way to this is not through the abandonment of Karma but through Karma performed in a spirit of total detachment and surrender to God. Social service is enjoined, but it is enjoined not as the goal but as a means to the attainment of the individual's highest spiritual end. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* also, in the concluding portion of the instruction given by Lord Krishna to Uddhava, Lord Krishna asks Uddhava whether as the result of his teaching, he (Uddhava) has understood Brahman and whether his ignorance and sorrow originating from the mind have disappeared (*'apyuddhava*

*tvayā brahma sakhe samavadhāritam api te vigato mohaḥ śokaścāsau manobhavaḥ'*) (XI. 29. 29). From these quotations it is clear that the aim of education in our country has not been merely the imparting of such knowledge as is useful to life or to society but such as gives a man complete liberation from ignorance and sorrow.

The West takes a more limited and—as I may say—pragmatic view of the purpose of education. For it the aim of education is to train men so that they may become useful members of society, whether as captains of industry or administrators or scholars or soldiers or in other ways. The educational outlook of the West is distinctly pragmatic. It discovers no higher aim of education than to produce useful citizens. It has, however, this advantage over the Eastern outlook that it is more concrete and more social. Yes, the Western outlook here, as well as in other things, is distinctly more concrete and social. Its disadvantage, however, is that it lacks the spiritual character of the Eastern outlook. And it is a truism in philosophy that unless a standpoint has a certain spiritual character, it cannot be in the proper sense cosmic, although it may outwardly appear to be so. For that which pushes a thing upwards from the individual to the cosmic plane is its spiritual ballast. In the present case, education from the purely social standpoint stops at the national level and cannot take us to the higher international or cosmic level. That is why Bergson made a fundamental distinction between morality from the national and from the international standpoint. What the world requires today is a thorough-going international outlook which can only be produced by infusing into the Western educational outlook something of the spirituality of the Eastern outlook. The Eastern outlook, again, must shed its individual character, and this it can do by taking its cue from the West.

With all its spirituality, its individualistic outlook stands in the way of the East effecting a radical change in the conception of education. It must give it up completely if

<sup>2</sup> *Yadvai kiñcaitadadhyagīṣṭā nāmaivaitat—* 'What you have studied so far is nothing but names' (*Chānd. Up.*, 7. 1. 3.).



it wants its spirituality to be a great force in the building up of a new humanity. The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is a grand illustration of what Indian thought is capable of achieving, once it abandons its individualistic standpoint. The West again must understand that man's destiny is not to be merely a social man or, as Aristotle has put it, a political animal. He must rise above this to the position of an international man, and ultimately to that of the divine man. Yes, man's destiny is to be the divine man, and our educational system must be in tune with this conception of man's destiny.

This of course means that his education should not be a godless one as the present system of education in vogue in our country is. Our Government has for political reasons been forced to adopt a policy of strict religious neutrality in education as well as in other matters. This policy everyone will agree is a very wise one. Any other policy would have undoubtedly spelt disaster for the country. But we venture to submit that a policy of strict religious neutrality is not inconsistent with giving a spiritual tone to our system of education. In fact such a spiritual tone is the best antidote against religious intolerance and fanaticism. It is necessary to make a distinction between institutional religion, with its ritual and social customs and usages, and universal religion or the pure spirit of religion which knows no ritual and prescribes no customs or usages. While institutional religions may come into conflict with one another, making it impossible for the State to lend its support to any of them, the spirit of religion is the very soul of man and needs all possible help to make it grow. There are certain texts, such as the Upanishads and the *Gita* which inculcate this pure spirit of religion, and it would be the height of folly to ban the teaching of them in educational institutions on the plea of religious neutrality. In this connection we cannot do better than quote the words of that great sage, Swami Vivekananda, whom even his worst enemy cannot accuse of sectarianism or communalism. This

great sage said<sup>3</sup> in his first public speech which he made in Colombo, after his return from America and Europe, in January 1897, 'We know that in our books a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths. The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly speaking—projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and so on;—these are the eternal principles founded upon the universal laws in Nature. The other set comprises the minor laws which guide the working of our everyday life. They belong more properly to the *Purānas*, to the *Smritis*, and not to the *Shrutis*.<sup>\*</sup> These have nothing to do with the other principles. Even in our own nation these minor laws have been changing all the time'. It is only the first set of truths to which he was prepared to give the name of religious truths, as appears from another passage in that same speech: 'At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India, comprises only the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in the category of religion'.<sup>4</sup>

These quotations from the speech of Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest exponents that ever lived of universal religion, clearly indicate that there is a clear distinction between universal religion as embodied in our *Shruti*, and institutional religion as embodied in the religious practices and usages which have varied greatly in the course of centuries. The principles of the former, far from encouraging religious intolerance and

<sup>3</sup> Vide *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Vol. III, p. III.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



fanaticism, are our only safeguard against them, and it would be a great mistake—I was going to say, it would be a crime against humanity—if we were to neglect the inculcation of them in the minds of our boys and girls in pursuance of a policy of religious neutrality. I feel, therefore, that if the East is really to help the West in the reorientation of educational policy on the basis of the concept of man, it must express in no uncertain voice its fundamental conviction that what the world needs, and needs most at the present moment when there is a danger of a total collapse of spiritual values, is only such education as can really help to build up the spiritual man.

To conclude: There is great possibility of a rapprochement between the East and the West if the former abandons definitely its negative attitude towards the world and its individualistic standpoint on the question of

human salvation, and if the latter is prepared to accept a spiritual view of the nature of man. On the question of freedom the meeting of the East and the West would be greatly facilitated if the East recognized that negative freedom, meaning freedom from external control, although it does not give any positive content to freedom, is still a necessary condition for it, and if the West likewise recognized that the negative conception of freedom is not enough but that it must be supplemented by the positive conception of it. On the question of the philosophy of education, the East must not neglect the great efforts that have been made in the West to make man a more useful citizen than before, and the West must be prepared to accept from the East its view that the fulfilment of man does not lie in his being merely a useful citizen but that his destiny is to be something higher than that.

## THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

BY DR. RADHA GOVINDA BASAK

(Continued from the May issue)

So the exposition of these doctrines leads us to think that the Buddha's system of teaching is greatly based on ethical principles of life. A man's life of purity with the possession of the higher sentiments of love and service to all beings may be helpful to the attainment of eternal bliss. The Buddhists are enjoined to contemplate whether the four noble truths are realities or not, and whether everything that has a birth is or is not impermanent on earth. The Buddha was only thirty-five when he attained enlightenment or Buddhahood, and he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life in preaching the profound and subtle truths he himself discovered and made innumerable converts to his faith from

the members of royal families and ordinary people, young and old, rich and poor, male and female, by journeying from place to place in Magadha and elsewhere.

The Buddhists believed in the Buddha's precept that the composite thing—the human body with its life-principle—arises out of the combination of the five *skandhas*—*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *samskāra*, and *viññāna*; and whatever phenomenon, cosmical, physical, or mental, which is originated from the process of working of the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is wholly unreal, and without any soul or Spirit to preside over it. They interpret the *rūpa-skandha* to mean the gross elements—earth, water, fire, etc., the objects



of the senses and the sense-organs. By *vedanā-skandha* they refer to the feelings of pleasure and pain, and gladness and dejectedness. To realize the outward form of objects is *saṃjñā-skandha*. In *samskāra-skandha* are included love, energy, religious belief or faith, compassion, joyousness, etc. left from actions in former births. The word *viññāna-skandha* means the power of becoming conscious of the real nature of things.

God and soul have found no place in Buddhism. The Buddhists do not believe in the presence of any soul in human body which (soul) is imperishable and invariable according to some other systems of philosophy. What is generally and popularly called the individual self, a living being or ego (*pudgala*, *jīva*, or *ātman*) is nothing but a flowing stream of bodily and mental phenomena, ever changing and transitory; and even its real existence is totally denied by some of their schools. Now the question arises in this connection as to whether the same individual continues in the next birth and if so, how? In trying to solve this problem the Buddhists hold the view that the *pudgala* (individual being) remains the same, and at the same time it becomes somewhat different. After death which is, in their opinion, nothing but the breaking up of the combination of 'faculties and characters', the personality of a man, under the pressure of a force by which those life-elements, faculties, and characters—viz. the five *skandhas*, tend to recombine, is again brought into being, and a new life is the result. This force, according to them, is nothing but the force of *karma* (action) and it is this aggregate of the results of good or bad actions which causes the recombination. Man goes to a new condition according to 'the total or resultant force of all the actions of the particular series of lives', and is thus born again. No soul, no spirit, nor anything like it, has passed on to the next creation or birth except, according to them, the force of *karma* which has compelled the new combination of the elements of the former individual who has only got a new life from a new birth. It has been

mentioned before that Buddhism lays the greatest stress on *karma*; and the doctrine of *karma* is the cardinal feature of it. This powerful force of *karma* of a man is the main cause of his rebirth.

In order to form an idea of the Buddhist term, *nirvāṇa*, we may at first refer to its definition as propounded by the later *Mahāyānin* Buddhists. They hold the view that the *dharma-cakra* or *nirvāṇa*, as taught by the Buddha, is characterized by the words *niṣpra-paṇca* (free from diffuseness and diversity, i.e. non-phenomenal), *anutpāda* (not liable to come into existence), *asambhava* (without origin), and *anālaya* (being above longings or desires). They also describe it as *vivikta* (lonely and detached), *prakṛtiśūnya* (supernatural) and *alakṣaṇa* (devoid of attributes or indescribable). A Buddhist poet has described it as '*Ākāśena sadā tulyam nirvikalpaṃ prabhāsavaram*'—i.e. it is similar to the sky or space, beyond distinctiveness and extremely shining. The followers of Buddha believed the *śūnya* or *nirvāṇa* as beyond existence and non-existence (*asti-nāsti-vinirmukta* or *catus-koṭi-vinirmukta*) and not partaking of the nature of any soul or non-soul (*ātma-nairātmya-vivarjita*). Every object or phenomenon except this *śūnya* is unreal and is as delusive as a magic, a mirage, a dream, a moon in the water, and an echo (*māyā-marīci-svapnābham jalendu-pratinādat*). In the dialogue between Nagasena, the Buddhist monk and the Indo-Greek king Menander (c. 125-95 B.C.) which is embodied in the Buddhist Pali work, the *Milinda-paṇho* (the Questions of Menander), we find the king questioning the monk regarding the precise nature, form, and measure or extent of what is so much talked of in Buddhist literature by the term *nirvāṇa*. The monk-teacher's reply to it may briefly be put in these words. Nagasena asked Menander to say what his reply to an interrogator should be if the latter put him the question: 'Do you know an ocean, and if so, how much water does it contain and how many lives live therein?' The king said that he would tell the interrogator that that question was out of order



and almost an impossible one, as it was not at all possible to be precise in calculating the measure of the ocean's waters, nor to count the number of beings that live in it. After this Nagasena told the king that in the same manner it is not possible to explain by means of any comparison or logical argument the nature, form, or measure of that great entity, *nirvāṇa*. What the teacher then said to the king regarding the good quality of *nirvāṇa* was that it remains untainted by all passions and torments, just as a lotus-leaf cannot be besmeared by water; and it is the extinguisher of the fire of all passions and torments, just as water extinguishes fire by its coldness; and again it quenches the three kinds of human thirsts or desires viz. *kāma-trṣṇā*, *bhava-trṣṇā* and *vibhava-trṣṇā* (already referred to) just as water slakes the ordinary thirst of all men, beasts, birds, etc. *Nirvāṇa* is the healer of the various poisonous ills of worldly life which all beings suffer from. If a man can establish himself in the path of virtuous deeds he can certainly expect the attainment of the blissful and tranquil state of *nirvāṇa*.

According to the Buddhist works like the *Viśuddhimārga*, etc. *nirvāṇa* means a total annihilation of all the constituent elements of being, viz. the five *skandhas*, and people who seek after such annihilation should strive to attain it by meditation, knowledge, and display of virtue. The *Arthaśālinī* and some other works define *nirvāṇa* as the quieting of all desires and evil deeds. But the great philosopher and commentator of Buddhist works, Buddhaghosha, has applied the word *nirvāṇa* to mean *śūnya* or absolute non-entity or non-existence, the first stage of which is attained by an Arhat who has reached the highest state of sanctification and the last stage of which is attained by a Buddha alone who succeeds in bringing about release from every conceivable attribute of being and thus enjoying eternal bliss. To us it appears plain that what the Brahminic Seers (Rishis) have, by their deep contemplation, attained as invariable and non-dual absolute entity, and what they have expressed by the terms Brahman, Paramātmā, or Bhagavat as

*pūrṇa* or full, in which we find a unity of all existences, is non-different from the *śūnya* or void of the Buddhists in which they speak of the absence of all existences. Intrinsically the two may be treated as identical. *Nirvāṇa* has been equated by the later Buddhist philosophers with the ultimate Truth or Reality—*tathatā* ('thatness')—i.e. the state of permanent and invariable existence. That Reality is *pūrṇa-tattva* or *śūnya-tattva* by realizing which one becomes completely still, silent or dumb as it were, being unable to express in words its nature. This description reminds us of what the great saint Sri Ramakrishna himself said about his own realization of *Brahma-nirvāṇa* as an inexpressible phenomenon. He told his disciples that he often thought of expressing to them his experience of the peculiar bliss of *nirvāṇa*. But he said that he felt himself every time unable to express the same in words, for, his mouth became as it were gagged and he was dumbfounded during his vision in a trance.

It is generally known that the Buddha either remained silent, or refused to answer, when queries were put to him by his disciples as to whether after death even the Tathāgata's own existence will continue in any form or condition, and whether there is any soul of a man as different from his body. All he used to say in reply was that such queries were unnecessary or they were unanswerable. In his opinion the discussions of these mysterious questions could not further the attainment of knowledge of the ultimate Reality. He rather felt that there was not at all any necessity of prolonged discussions on these problems. His own view on these might rather be expressed by the following *gāthā* of the *Dhammapada* (369) which reads thus:

*Siñca bhikkhu ! imam nāvam sitta te  
lahumessati,  
Chetvā rāgañca dosañca tato  
nibbānamehisi.*

'O Bhikshu! empty this boat (of existence, of all waters of false discussions or guesses); when emptied, the boat will proceed quickly. Having cut off all attachment and hatred, you will reach *nirvāṇa*'. The Bhikshus are exhorted



to give up all false conjectures and reasonings on such problems. They are rather asked to conform themselves to the precepts of the Master and the *nirvāṇa* shall be within their easy reach. The Buddha took a great pleasure in explaining metaphysical queries to the members of both the laity and the congregation with the help of easily understandable and apt parables. We know from the *Majjhima-nikāya* of a parable which the Master narrated to Mālunkāputta, when the latter questioned him on the real existence or non-existence of man and matter, and other such metaphysical topics. He replied advising him not to spend away much of his life's time in dialectics, for such long discussions and debates would not spare for him much time to strive for release from the sufferings and torments of life and for the study and adoption of easy and true methods for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. In this connection the Master narrated to him a very beautiful and instructive parable which may briefly be noted here: A man was struck by a hunter with a poison-barbed arrow which could not be extracted from his body. His friends and relatives took him to a surgeon who at once set himself to begin an operation on the affected part of his body. But the man hurt by the arrow strongly opposed the doctor's operation, crying aloud: 'Stay, doctor, stay; I will not allow myself to be operated upon until I know of the name, lineage, caste, form of body—small or large, of the man who discharged the arrow from his bow against me, and also the class of weapons to which the particular arrow belonged'. If the surgical operation was thus stayed till all his queries were fully answered, the fate of the man could be easily comprehended and the end of his life was inevitable. So also, if a seeker of truth waits till all his queries on such problems as the soul, the hereafter etc. are fully debated and answered, he will not be able to realize the Four Noble Truths during the short tenure of his life. Hence, to be delivered from worldly sufferings one should not forget the verses of the *Dhammapada* in which it is stated that 'one should take refuge

with Buddha (the Teacher), Dharma (the Law), and Sangha (the Congregation or the Church) and realize with clear understanding the Four Noble or holy Truths, viz. pain, the origination of pain, the cessation or destruction of pain, and the Eightfold holy Path that leads to the quieting of pain. (For,) that is the safe refuge, that is the best refuge; (and) having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain'.

In many other systems of religious beliefs, ethics finds a place only incidentally and secondarily, but in the Buddhist system its place is held very high. The essential virtues, according to it, are good conduct and its basic qualities, viz. friendship, compassion, non-violence. Good and evil, virtue and vice, well-being and adversity—these constitute the chief topics in this system. If perfection of human life is the aim of man, it cannot be achieved without adoption of moral virtues and repulsion from vices. It is again thus stated in the *Dhammapada* (183):

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam kusalassa*

*upasampadā*

*Sacittapariyodāpanam etam buddhāna*

*sāsanam.*

'Not to commit any sin, to take to doing good, and to purify one's own mind (i.e. to cleanse one's inmost thoughts)—that is the teaching of (all) the Buddhas—the Awakened and Enlightened Ones'.

In order to remove hatred, conflict, and injury prevalent everywhere on earth and bring about real freedom, tolerance, amity, and conciliation, our means must be righteous. No good objective is ever attained without good means. Hence one of the highest precepts of Buddhism is laid down in the famous couplet:

*Akkodhena jine kodham asādhum*

*sādhunā jine,*

*Jine kadariyam dānena saccena alika-*

*vādinam.*

'Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the greedy by liberality or gift, and the speaker of falsehood by truth'. (*Dhammapada*, 223).



The Buddhists also believed in the Eternal Law preached by all the Buddhas, viz.,

*Na hi verena verāni sammantīdha  
kudācanam,  
Averena ca sammanti esa dhammo  
sanantano.*

'Never does hatred cease by hatred, but it does cease by love (alone)—this is an old or eternal law'. (*Dhammapada*, 5). If this lesson could be made the motto of life by all people of the world, there would certainly be an entire cessation of all quarrels and conflicts.

We read in the *Suttanipāta* that the Buddha on being asked by his dear disciple Sāriputta as to what is to be regarded as the greatest danger for a Bhikshu, proceeding on the path of the immortal *nirvāṇa*, replied saying that 'he should never be afraid of the doctrines of other sects (*paradhammikānam na santaseyya*). So bigotry is to be eschewed and toleration in religious matters is to be practised as a policy of life; and the Master said, moreover, that one should not utter a harsh word to any man even if he be enraged by the latter (*rusito'pi vācam pharusam na vajjā*), and one should never mind what others say of him (*janavādadhammāya na cetayeyya*).

Lord Buddha himself was devoted to a life of earnestness and strenuousness (*appamāda* and *utthāna*) and by his self-control, renunciation, non-violence, love, friendship, compassion, and service to people he rose to the highest pinnacle of moral virtues. It may be supposed that it was the ethics of this system which must have been the cause of the propagation of this faith (Buddhism) not only in India of the day, but also in many far distant countries of Asia wherein its influence spread. It may be noted that the great Maurya emperor, Ashoka, was successful in unifying the whole of India only after his conversion to and promulgation of the cardinal teachings of Buddhism and in sending missionaries to countries situated even on the Eastern Mediter-

ranean. All historians are aware of the fact that in still later days this religion crossed over to Ceylon in the south, to Burma, Siam, and Indo-China in the east, and to the present-day United States of Indonesia, viz. Java, Sumatra, and other islands there in the south-east, to Khotan, Eastern Turkistan, China, Manchuria, and Mongolia and even to parts of far-off Siberia in the north, and also to the islands of the Japanese Empire. Let us hope that Java's wondrous Buddhist shrine at Boro-Budur, built there in the form of a terraced pyramid, with its richly decorated walls, possessing not less than four hundred figures of the Buddha, will remind the world of the powerful integrating influence that Buddhism exerted on the minds of people so distantly situated from the land of its birth (India).

We may now conclude with a reference to the ten *veramaṇis*, prohibitions or abstinences (also called *daśaśīla* or *daśaśikṣāpada* in the *pratimokṣa*) which the novices in the path of Buddhism had to utter in these words:

'I take upon myself the abstinence—from destroying life; from taking what is not given; from leading an unchaste life; from speaking the untruth; from giving myself to intoxicating drugs; from eating at irregular hours; from seeing musical and dancing performances and other shows and pageants; from wearing garlands, perfumes, unguents and other bodily decorations; from using high couches and seats; and from accepting gifts of gold and silver'.

May we never forget the last verbal message which Lord Buddha gave to Ananda and other dear disciples just on the eve of his demise, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*:

*'Vayadhammā saṁkhārā, appamādena  
sampādettha'*

'All the constituent elements of being are liable to destruction; strive (therefore) after salvation with diligence or earnestness'.

(Concluded)



# PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

The *Bhagavad Gita* occupies a unique place in the religious and philosophical literature of India. Its popularity is second to that of no other Hindu scripture. The *Gita* is written in the form of a dialogue between Krishna, the teacher, and Arjuna, the disciple. The background is a battle-field, where not only an earthly kingdom but righteousness itself is at stake. Arjuna is faced with a moral dilemma, being torn between his duty to society and his duty to himself.

The first chapter of the *Gita* describes the two armies on the eve of the battle. The military leaders, according to their rank and position, mounted chariots, elephants, and horses. Each warrior waved his pennon carrying his own cognizance. Everyone carried a trumpet with which he sounded the call to battle. It was indeed a wondrous sight. The best of India's manhood was there.

As the two armies stood poised to strike, Arjuna asked Krishna to drive his chariot into the space between them so that he could behold the assembled combatants. Casting his eyes on both sides, he saw people to whom he was bound by a thousand ties of love, respect, and affection. He realized that he must wade through their blood in order to win victory and regain the kingdom; and their blood would be on his hands. A cold shiver passed through his spine, his body trembled, and the mighty bow slipped from his hand. Arjuna recounted to Krishna the evil effects of war: the indiscriminate destruction of life, the death of the leaders of society, to be followed by social chaos and family disintegration. No, he could not kill his enemies, although they might kill him, 'even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds—how much less for this earth!' 'Far better', said Arjuna to Krishna, 'would it be for me if they, weapons in hand, should slay me in the battle,

unarmed and unresisting'. Arjuna felt he would rather renounce the world, retire into the forest, and lead the peaceful life of a religious hermit than bear the responsibility for this horrible slaughter.

From the second chapter begin the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The setting of the magnificent dialogue—which gradually becomes a monologue, the teacher instructing the disciple about the profundities of life and death—could not have been more appropriate. On a battle-field men stand on the borderline between the here and the hereafter, and life itself hangs by a thread. The transitory nature of all things is clearly realized; petty attachment is given up. In view of the imminent crisis, the mind acquires a strange inwardness and concentration, and things can be viewed with utter detachment. A righteous war can be a spiritual discipline.

Arjuna was confused by the two ideals laid down by Hindu philosophy. These are the ideals of action and renunciation, which, like the warp and woof of a tapestry, criss-cross the Hindu pattern of life. According to the Vedas, these two ideals are primordial, being ordained by the divine Creator himself for the protection of the social order. The goal of action is the attainment of happiness here on earth and in heaven after death; that of renunciation is the attainment of the highest goal in a transcendental experience. Both are necessary for social stability. The path of action is trodden by the majority of men, who identify themselves with their bodies, feel bound by social obligations, regard both the physical world and the ego as real, and crave the results of their actions. Such people must perform action to discharge their duties to society and also to propitiate the gods, or higher powers, who in many ways control man's life. Action performed in an unselfish spirit purifies the



mind, and the doer realizes that all worldly acquisitions are in the long run transitory and a cause of suffering. Then he follows the path of renunciation, giving up desires and attachments. He contemplates with singleness of purpose the Reality which forms the basis of phenomenal existence. Hindu philosophy recognizes the validity of both work and renunciation as suitable to two types of mind.

Arjuna was worldly-minded. He belonged to the military caste and was conscious of his duty to the king and the country. He smarted under the unrighteous treatment meted out by his wicked cousins. Of his own volition he had come to the battle-field to punish them for their injustice and falsehood. He did not possess that spiritual elevation which regards all worldly values, good or evil, as illusory. He lacked that inner certitude without which renunciation becomes only a way to escape the hard duties of life. He himself complained to Krishna that he was confused about Dharma or duty (II.7). What was the cause of this confusion? Suddenly on the battle-field he found himself faced with a responsibility that would shake the stoutest heart. He was still attached to his friends and relatives, whose imminent death he sorrowfully anticipated.

Krishna characterized Arjuna's apparent piety as lowness of spirit, unbecoming a noble mind, dishonourable, and detrimental to the attaining of heaven, which every military hero covets. (II. 2-3). Arjuna was a coward.

Arjuna's problem of making a choice between a duty requiring harsh action and the enjoyment of the peace that comes from the relinquishment of all action is a universal problem of man. The *Gita* offers a solution. Hence its teachings have a universal appeal. The central theme of the *Gita* is activism. In the Hindu tradition the rightness of an action is determined by religious and philosophical beliefs. Therefore, before discussing the practical teachings of the *Gita*, let us devote a few words to the soul and its destiny, the universe, and the ultimate Reality, or the Godhead, as they are described in the book.

Krishna began his instruction with a state-

ment of the immortality, eternity, and non-duality of the soul. 'He who looks on the Self as the slayer, and he who looks on the Self as the slain—neither of these apprehends aright. The Self slays not nor is slain'. (II. 19). 'It is never born, nor does it ever die, nor, having once been, does it again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain'. (II. 20). The fear of death, either with reference to ourselves or to our kith and kin, often swerves us from the path of duty. But the knowledge of the soul's immortality removes this fear and brings to our action, however dangerous, a feeling of detachment, warmth, and dedication. Further, the courage necessary for the accomplishment of an action comes from a man's soul. The knowledge of the soul's deathless nature brings out this courage.

An eternal portion of the Godhead becomes, as it were, a living soul. It is associated with the senses and the mind and is called the empirical individual. The individual soul identified with the body acts under the impulsion of the Gunas. All actions, physical or mental, are the interplay of the Gunas, the real Self remaining the detached onlooker. (XIII. 22).

What is the nature of the universe? The *Gita* compares the universe with an imperishable Ashvattha tree. (XV. 1.). It is imperishable because it is sustained by a continuous series of births and deaths, without beginning and without end. It is called a tree on account of its changing nature. How does it come into existence? The *Gita* condemns the mechanistic interpretation of the universe as a self-evolving, self-sustaining, and self-destroying entity. 'Prakriti, or nature, under My guidance, gives birth to all things; and because of this the world revolves'. (IX. 10). The Lord projects all beings at the beginning of evolution, nature being only an instrument in His hands. He is not affected by this act, since He sits by as one neutral and perfectly unattached. In reality the Lord does nothing; Nature, animated by His proximity, evolves



the universe. All activities in Nature—the interminable antagonisms, the mutual devouring of various forms of existence, the evolving, the differentiating, the organizing actions of matter—are due to Nature itself, the Lord energizing everything by His mere presence. The element of *rajas* in Nature creates, that of *sattva* preserves, and that of *tamas* destroys.

As long as a man lives under the spell of *Māyā* and believes his individuality to be real, he cannot and must not deny the universe. For such a person the *Gita* formulates ethics, metaphysics, cosmology, theology, and various spiritual disciplines, with the help of which he may understand the illusory nature of the individual self and the universe and strive after the realization of Brahman. To the illumined person the universe is Brahman. He sees everything as Brahman.

The *Gita* aims ultimately at the liberation of man. The various disciplines it lays down show the way to liberation through the knowledge of ultimate Reality, or the Absolute. What, then, is the nature of the Absolute and what are its manifestations?

The *Gita* describes the Absolute in its two aspects: acosmic and cosmic. In the thirteenth chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna speaks of the supreme Brahman, which is the goal of knowledge, through the knowing of which one attains to immortality. This Brahman is 'without beginning and is said to be neither being nor non-being'. (XIII. 12). It is the negation of all attributes and is realized as the oneness of existence. The cosmic aspect of Reality, or Brahman with attributes, is discussed from the standpoint of creation. From the standpoint of the attributeless Brahman there is no creation; there is neither the manifold universe nor the perceiving ego.

Brahman with attributes is sometimes called the Cosmic Person, containing the totality of bodies, minds, and souls. 'Its hands and feet are everywhere; its existence envelops all. It shines through the functions of all the senses, and yet it is devoid of senses. It is unattached, and yet it sustains all'. (XIII. 13-14). The apparently irreconcilable pairs of opposites—

life and death, good and evil, fear and fearlessness (X. 4-5)—are reconciled in it. They are the conditions of the phenomenal manifestation. The Cosmic Soul itself is detached; it does not increase by good or decrease by evil.

Man often wants a God who can satisfy his whole being and be an object of love, faith, prayer, and devotion. Such a God is man's constitutional necessity. 'The task of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest is more difficult; for the ideal of the Unmanifest is hard to attain for those who are embodied'. (XII. 5). The personal God offers finite man a foothold by which he can approach the infinite Godhead. A strong theism runs through the entire *Bhagavad Gita*. The element of Bhakti, or divine love, is stressed as a spiritual discipline. Brahman assumes a personal form for the welfare of devotees. This is accomplished through Maya; hence the Personal God is ultimately unreal. Though the Personal God and an ordinary creature are both associated with Maya, yet the former is the master of Maya (*māyādhīśa*) and the latter under its control (*māyādhīna*). Maya cannot injure the Personal God; on the contrary, it becomes His instrument to fulfil His cosmic function.

The Personal God is the goal of the different religions and is worshipped under various names. 'He is the goal and the support; the Lord and the witness; the abode and the refuge and the friend'. (IX. 18). He is worshipped by the devotee through love and self-surrender. He fulfils our desires. 'They who worship Me, meditating on their identity with Me, and ever devoted to Me—to them I carry what they lack and for them I preserve what they already have'. (IX. 23). To Him the devotees offer their actions. 'Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever you practise in the form of austerities, O Arjuna, do it as an offering to Me'. (IX. 27).

Universality of religious outlook is the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita*. A genuine tolerance pervades its teachings. 'In whatever way men approach Me, even so do I



reward them ; for it is My path, O Arjuna, that men follow in all things'. (IV. 11).

The *Gita* speaks of another aspect of the Godhead, a humanized aspect, known as the Avatāra, the Godman or incarnation. An Avatara is the descent of God into man, and not the ascent of man into God. If God is the saviour of man, He must manifest Himself from time to time, when spiritual values are threatened. Great crises in human life are signalized by the birth of an Avatara. He, by his life and teachings, shows the sceptical world the reality of God and the way to liberation. God becomes man so that man may become God. According to Hinduism, God's incarnation is not limited to one time, place, or person. He is born whenever there arises a cosmic necessity. 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness (*dharma*) and a rise of unrighteousness (*adharma*), I incarnate Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the protection of righteousness, I am born in every age'. (IV. 8).

The practical teachings of the *Gita* are intended for people of different temperaments: philosophical, emotional, contemplative, and active. As stated before, the special occasion for the teaching of the *Gita* was furnished by a moral predicament, in which Arjuna had to decide whether action or renunciation of action would be conducive to his ultimate spiritual welfare. All through the book is emphasized the discipline of action as a way to liberation.

Action as a spiritual discipline is called Karma Yoga. The word *karma* means what is done—deed, action. The word *yoga* means union or method of union. Karma Yoga is the disciplined action by which one communes with God or is ultimately united with Reality. Activity is seen everywhere, both in man and in outer Nature. A man is active not only in the waking state but also in sleep. While he is asleep his lungs, heart, and other organs work. In Nature, likewise, water, air, and the celestial bodies are active. The solid rock is a centre of activity. According to science, space itself is vibrating. 'Verily no one can

remain, even for an instant, without doing work. For, driven by the Gunas born of Prakriti, everyone is made to act in spite of himself'. (IV 5). 'Do your allotted action; for action is superior to non-action. Even the bare maintenance of your body will not be possible if you remain inactive'. (III. 8). The social order is preserved only through work. When a work is done with a spiritual end in view, it is called Karma Yoga. Disciplined action is different from mechanical action.

Karma meant several different things at the time the *Bhagavad Gita* was written. In the Vedic tradition it signified rituals (*yajña*) for the propitiation of the gods, gifts to the poor (*datta*), and philanthropic actions (*pūrta*) such as digging wells, planting orchards, or making highways for the public welfare. Through such meritorious action one enjoyed happiness in heaven. The non-dualistic teachings of the Upanishads, which aim at the experience of oneness, were opposed to the performance of such actions, since the latter were based on the notion of the multiplicity of the actor, the instrument of action, and the result. According to the theistic ideals prevalent at the time of the Upanishads, Karma meant the worship of God. In the *Gita* it refers mainly to social obligations according to one's stage of life and position in society.

Work brings man into relationship with the world and keeps the wheel of creation going. It establishes harmony between man and the different cosmic forces. The *Gita* says that the Lord, in the beginning, created men together with work and ordained that they would not only multiply by work but also fulfil their desires (III. 10). Men should propitiate the gods by sacrificial works and receive protection from them in return. If a man enjoys rain, air, sunlight, and the other gifts of the gods, without propitiating them by offering oblations, he really acts like a thief (III. 11-12). Even an utterly mundane action, such as growing food, is, according to the Vedic theory, a spiritual act. Physical bodies are created from food; food is produced from



rain; rain comes from the sacrifice; the sacrifice is born of action; action is laid down in the Vedas; and the Vedas are created by Brahman. Therefore the divine spirit permeates all actions (III. 14-15). This is described as the 'wheel of creation'. He who ignores the spiritual element in action and works only for his own selfish purpose lives in sin and lives in vain (III. 16). Even perfected souls, who have no personal desire to fulfil, work for the preservation of the social order so as to keep the wheel going.

Karma has a binding effect. It entangles the worker in the world. When an action is accomplished, subtle impressions (*samskāra*) are left behind, which at a future time and under favourable conditions become the cause of new action. The second action, likewise, creates new impressions, which, in their turn, produce another new action. So man works impelled by necessity. How does one avoid this entanglement? The solution does not lie in the renunciation of action through weariness or other reasons, but in Karma Yoga. 'Yoga is skill in action'. (II. 50). Yoga not only robs the work of its power to bind but also transforms it into an efficient means of winning freedom. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna: 'Far inferior, indeed, is mere action to action performed with evenness of mind. Wretched are they who work for results'. (II. 49). 'Being steadfast in Yoga, O Arjuna, perform actions, abandoning attachment and remaining unruffled both in success and in failure'. (II. 48). 'The wise, of even mind, renounce the fruit of action. Free from the fetters of birth, they attain the state that is beyond all evil'. (II. 51).

There are two elements in all voluntary actions. First, there is the immediate feeling of pleasure or pain. The wise man should know that these sensations arise from the contact of the senses with their objects. They

are natural but impermanent. One should endure them (II. 14). Further, the pleasure resulting from the contact of objects is ultimately painful (V. 22). A man grieves when he loses it, and if it continues long, he is bored by it. Therefore the Karma Yogi is not attached to immediate sensations. The second, and an important element in all voluntary action, is the desire for the result (*phala*). This generally supplies the incentive to work. Arjuna had come to the battle-field with the object of regaining his kingdom. He regarded action as a means to an end. But in Karma Yoga, the Karma or action is a means to a spiritual end only. The longing for the result is not the motive, because the result is not desired. 'To work alone you are entitled, never to its fruit. Neither let your motive be the fruit of action, nor let your attachment be to non-action'. (II. 47). The material result will surely follow. But for a Yogi the result is not the impelling motive, because he does not seek it. What follows then? Evenness and purification of mind (*samatvam*).

The desire for the fruit of action is harmful for more than one reason. If the motive of self-interest impels us to action, then we may not always see what is right. Self-interest blinds us. Even if we succeed in determining the right, in our eagerness for the result we may pursue a dubious path. Therefore the goal of Karma Yoga is to work for work's sake, in the cause of humanity, and at the same time eschew all thought of personal profit. The *Gita* repudiates the individual's exclusive claim. 'Those who cook food only for themselves, verily eat sin'. (III. 13). A Karma Yogi, in order to secure social justice, may even participate in a war, provided he is guided by knowledge and compassion and not by delusion and cruelty.

(To be continued)



# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

‘Whose blessed son are you?’

‘I am thy son, Mother’.

That was the first time in my life I heard the voice of the Holy Mother who addressed me with a question in an affectionate tone and my reply to her query seemed to please her. This took place in a house (generally known as *haludgudām-bāḍi*, meaning ‘a godown for storing turmeric’) situated in the northern quarter of Calcutta, within Baghbazar area. The house was a three-storeyed one, the ground-floor of which was used as a godown and the two upper floors had been let out for residential purposes. In the eastern block of the house, on the first floor, were two rooms, with an open space between them. In the eastern corner of this open space there was a short staircase for going to the second floor, where the Holy Mother used to reside with Golāp-Mā,<sup>1</sup> and where Gopāler-Mā<sup>2</sup> and other women devotees used to come and live for a few days at frequent intervals. There were three rooms facing a wide, covered verāṇḍa on the south; on the west was an open, spacious roof wherefrom the Holy Mother used to have a clear view of the Ganges for which she possessed a special love and regard even from her early days.

On hearing my reply, Gopaler-Mā, who was standing near by, said to the Holy Mother, ‘My Gopal will bring many beautiful children to you by His magical fascination’. Mother stood before me at the moment with-

<sup>1</sup> Golap-Mā was a woman devotee of great spiritual attainments. She sought spiritual refuge at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna who accepted her as his own and blessed her. She was one of the constant and most intimate companions of the Holy Mother and stayed with her till the end, rendering her loving service in many ways.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Gopal’s Mother’ (or Gopaler-Mā, in Bengali), also called Aghoremāni Devi, was one of the important women disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

out covering her face, unlike what she generally used to do when appearing before strangers, and I had her *darśan* with unspeakable joy at heart. Her calm compassionate, and gracious look, her face beaming with a radiant glow of divine mercy and loving-kindness, and her tender and affectionate maternal majesty inspired within me a feeling of hope and trust in her and illumined my mind with the vision of the Divine which alone is our refuge and strength. I offered flowers at her feet. Mother asked me where I lived and whether my parents were alive. I replied, ‘No, Mother, there is none. I have lost both of my parents within a year’. In a sympathetic and affectionate voice, Mother said to me, ‘Oh, what a misery! But, child, don’t be worried. These earthly ties are transitory; today they seem the be-all and end-all of life and tomorrow they vanish. Your real tie is with God—with Thakur (meaning Sri Ramakrishna). Come here frequently and take *prasād*’. With deep emotion and tears in my eyes, I addressed her saying, ‘Mother, I have got you—the Divine Mother—as my true mother; this is my great consolation. I want only your blessings and grace’. Mother said, ‘Thakur has already showered his blessings on you, my boy. Whenever there is a holiday at your school, come and stay here. Now, take this *prasād* and go to Yogen<sup>3</sup> and Rakhal<sup>4</sup> whose holy company will elevate you and dispel all grief and sorrow from your mind’. I immediately went downstairs with the fruits and sweets which the Holy Mother had given me with her own hands.

Swami Yogananda was very much pleased

<sup>3</sup> Swami Yogananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>4</sup> Swami Brahmananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



to hear from me my conversation with the Mother. He gave me some advice as to how I should attend to my studies and at the same time practise control of mind. In the meantime, Swami Brahmananda came near and said to me, 'Well, do you take regular physical exercise in the morning and afternoon? Both the mind and the body should be developed simultaneously. Stick to cleanliness. Don't hobnob with those boys who neglect their studies and who drag you into profitless pastimes. There are also mischievous boys who indulge in telling lies. They tempt other boys into evil ways. Shun them altogether. Don't even talk to them. You must be truthful. You may come here after school-hours and listen to our words of advice. That will help you to acquire knowledge and become more spiritual-minded. Remember that during student-life the ideal must be *brahmacharya*. You must be pure in body, mind, and speech'. These words were very illuminating and impressed me much.

Master Mahāshaya<sup>5</sup> ('M.', the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) used to come to this place every Saturday afternoon and stay on till Sunday evening, and sometimes even till Monday morning. I too would stay there often during the night with Master Mahāshaya. He used to relate to us many inspiring anecdotes about Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother. All her devotees used to come there for *darśan* and a few aspirants got initiation from the Mother. One day I heard her say to a woman disciple, 'Sometimes people of little faith and of unsteady mind come for initiation. I mentally read their past history from their very appearance and behaviour and ask them whether they were previously initiated by someone else. When they reply in the affirmative, I tell them, "Strange! You have come again for initiation! You have no faith in the *mantra* already given by your Guru! What is the *mantra* but the holy name of God. Why have you come for initiation again?" Then

they beg to be forgiven and again implore me with tears in their eyes. I cannot bear anybody's tears. I pray to Thakur for strengthening their faith and through his direction I give them initiation in addition to the *mantra* already received by them. This additional *mantra* is given for fresh stimulus and strength in order to increase their faith in the name of God'. The woman disciple observed, 'Through your grace and blessing they will be saved'. Mother immediately said, 'No, no; I am nobody. It is Thakur who graciously blesses them. I am only his instrument'.

Once I went to the Mother's place in the evening for *darśan*. Instead of going to meet the Mother first, I sat listening to Swami Yogananda's absorbing conversation with Devendra Nath Mazumdar, a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Yogananda said: 'Thakur was wisdom personified'. He often told us that the Divine Mother had taught him everything. His teachings and parables show his power of keen observation, deep thinking, and subtle reasoning. They throw new light on and illumine the mind and dispel all doubts and problems. We did not understand him then. But, now, as time goes on, we are getting glimpses of the infinite knowledge and unbounded love that human form (of the Master) enshrined. Even his ordinary utterances and actions seemed to us to have a deep meaning. Truly, the Vaishnava devotees say of Chaitanya that whatever he did in deep ecstasy and inebriation of God was a divine dispensation (*līlā*). We know this now about Thakur through our own experiences. Even from his early childhood he was a God-intoxicated man. His wisdom, character, and unique personality drew people to him from the highest to the lowest rank of society. We never saw him despise anybody, be he a sinner or a saint. Ordinary people will not be able to fathom the depth of the meaning of his teachings and message, of his wonderful life, unstained purity and infinite love, of his all-embracing spiritual realization, and of his unprecedented *tapasyā* and renunciation. His life is a demonstration of all the spiritual

<sup>5</sup> He was a prominent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. His full name was Mahendra Nath Gupta.



truths expressed in the scriptures and realized by prophets and Avatāras. Naren (Swami Vivekananda) was specially brought by him from the *sapta-r̥ṣi-maṇḍala* for preaching his lofty ideals, for the elevation of the masses, and for the good of humanity'. Devendra Nath Mazumdar also spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and emphasized the grace and kindness he showered on him at a time when he had resolved to renounce the world. Thakur reminded Devendra of his grief-stricken old mother by way of consolation and said, 'Your brother Surendra is dead and it is your religious duty to look after the mother who is to you a living "Mother of the Universe". Renunciation arising from grief and misery does not last long. Live in the world and serve your mother—this is your primary duty and religion. Do it sincerely and you will be able to advance in the path of spirituality'. I listened to these talks with rapt attention. As it became late at night, Devendra Nath Mazumdar went away. Immediately after his departure it struck me that I had not yet seen the Holy Mother though I had come there specially for her *darśan*. I told Swami Yogananda about it. He called Golap-Ma and told her to inform the Holy Mother about me. But Golap-Ma replied, 'Mother has gone to bed'. Seeing me dejected and disappointed, Swami Yogananda told me, 'There is no help now. Mother is asleep. Come tomorrow'. As soon as he finished saying this, Golap-Ma called me and said, 'Mother is waiting for you, come immediately'. My heart leapt with joy and I at once went upstairs and was fortunate in touching the feet of the Holy Mother. Mother asked me, 'Why did you delay so long?' I replied, 'Mother, I was listening to the conversation between Yogen Maharaj and Deven Mazumdar so attentively that I forgot everything else for the time being'. Mother smiled and blessed me saying, 'Oh, I see you were with Thakur and enjoying his divine *līlā*, so you forgot your Mother!'. I remained speechless as I could not find any suitable reply. Mother told me softly, 'Go home now; it is already late at night'. With a joyful

heart I went downstairs and took leave of the Swamis living there. I then thought within myself what deep affection and kindness were shown to me by the Holy Mother! She came out, leaving her bed at night, only to grant me *darśan*.

It may be noted here that now outside people, introduced by well-known devotees, could freely come for obtaining the *darśan* of the Holy Mother and that the strictness hitherto observed in this matter had been greatly relaxed. Nāg Mahashaya<sup>6</sup> came to this house for *darśan* of the Holy Mother and *prasād* was given to him on a sal leaf. He did not cast away the leaf after taking the *prasād* but chewed and swallowed it. All were taken aback at this and were moved by the deep devotion and regard Nag Mahashaya had for *prasād*. To him even the leaf on which *prasād* was served became holy and part of *prasād*! The Holy Mother made a kind observation about him saying, 'Many devotees came to Thakur, but a devotee like Durga Charan can scarcely be seen'. It was a heavenly sight to witness the devotional feelings that shook the whole body of Durga Charan Nag when he slowly uttered from his quivering lips, 'Mother is very gracious, very kind'.

In this house, on the Lakshmi Puja day, I was initiated by Swami Brahmananda, with the blessings of the Holy Mother. She was so very kind to me on that day that even now when I recall her gracious words of affection, they give me inspiration and a new vigour of life. That memory is as fresh as ever.

One day I said to the Holy Mother that I could not concentrate well my mind during meditation. My mind was very fickle and unsteady. She smilingly replied, 'Oh, that is nothing—that is the nature of the mind, just like that of the ears and eyes. Do it regularly. The name of God is more powerful than the senses. It will become all right in time if you practise regularly. Always think of Thakur

<sup>6</sup> Durga Charan Nag, a devoted householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



who is looking after you. Don't be worried about your lapses'. I said, 'Mother, bless me that I may practise regularly'. Mother, with a kind smile, told me, 'Be sincere in your practice, words, and deeds. You will feel how blessed you are! His blessings are always showered on all creatures on the earth. It is needless to ask for it. Practise meditation sincerely and then you will understand His infinite grace. God wants sincerity, truthfulness, and love. Outward verbal effusions do not touch Him. Observe punctuality of time in your practice and take His name and utter the *mantra* concentrating your mind with all your might. If you exert yourself sincerely and, banishing all other thoughts, pray to Him from the core of your heart, then your call will be responded to and your prayers will be granted through His grace'. I touched the Mother's feet and went downstairs taking the *prasād* which was given to me by Golap-Ma at the direction of the Holy Mother.

On one occasion the Swamis of the Alambazar Math were invited to the Mother's place and I had the good fortune of taking my meal with them in the same room. Swami Ramakrishnananda could not come as he was busy with the worship in the Math shrine. All felt his absence keenly and Mother sent *prasād* for him through Swami Niranjanananda. All were sumptuously fed with a variety of dishes according to the Mother's wish and under the supervision of Golap-Ma. It was a happy sight and all enjoyed the feast as a token of Mother's grace and affection.

Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist and actor, and a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, used to come there occasionally and have talks with Swami Yogananda and Swami Brahmananda. Whenever Girish Ghosh referred to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, his manner of expression was extraordinarily superb and different from that of the other devotees. His deep reverence for and strong faith in their divinity and unbounded grace were expressed in his utterances and he inspired those who happened to listen to him. He told me one day, long after, that at first

he and other lay devotees of Sri Ramakrishna could not recognize the greatness of the Holy Mother: 'We used to pay our respectful tribute to her as the spiritual consort of our Master. We looked upon him alone as our guide, friend, father, and mother—all combined. It was Niranjan (Swami Niranjanananda) who opened my eyes. In the midst of the grim tragedies of life, stricken with grief and sorrow, I felt for a time quite perplexed and could not console my disturbed mind. During my sad bereavement, Niranjan came to me often and tried to divert my mind by his spiritual talk. One day I held him, "Brother Niranjan, it is a pity that I cannot now see Sri Ramakrishna who is my shelter, my only refuge". Niranjan interrupted me, saying, "Why! Mother is there. Is there any difference between Thakur and Mā? Can you imagine Narayana without Lakshmi, Shiva without Pārvati, Rama without Sita, and Krishna without Rādhā or Rukmini?" I was taken aback. I told him, "What do you say—Thakur and Mother are one and the same?" Niranjan replied, "Well, you believe that Sri Ramakrishna is an Avatara, God incarnate in human form. Do you mean to say that he took an ordinary woman (*jīva*) as spiritual partner in his divine life? You must remember the words of our Master, 'Brahman and Shakti are one and the same—though in manifestation they appear to us as two'. Mother is Shakti, the Shakti of Purna-Brahma Ramakrishna'. His utterances cleared my vision and I could at once recognize the Divine Mother—the Mother of the Universe—incarnated as the Holy Mother for the salvation of mankind. I felt a strong urge to go to Jayrambati<sup>7</sup> and see our Holy Mother, who alone could wipe my tears and remove my sorrow in my dire calamities. Niranjan approved of my suggestion and voluntarily offered to accompany me there. But Balaram Bose<sup>8</sup> vehemently opposed this proposal as he did not like that I should disturb the Holy

<sup>7</sup> The Holy Mother's native village.

<sup>8</sup> Balaram Bose, a leading householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



Mother with my worldly problems and miseries. At the time, Swami Vivekananda was away from Calcutta and the matter was referred to him by Niranjan. Getting his approval we started for Jayrambati. I could hardly express my joy when I first went to Kamarpukur<sup>9</sup>—to me the cottage where Sri Ramakrishna was born seemed a Rishi's holy hermitage; the scenery and its surrounding environment were enchanting. Thence we proceeded to Jayrambati. There, during my stay, I directly asked the Mother, "Well, Mā, are you my real mother or a mother as though adopted?" The Mother said, "Yes, I am your real mother". Further, Girish Ghosh told us in forceful language, pregnant with deep emotion, 'Yes, Mother—the Divine Mother—has appeared as a poor village girl, living in a remote hamlet, away from the din and bustle of a town where life reflects only the formal and artificial ways of worldly-wise and sophisticated men and women. I did not ask for anything from Mother. As soon as I went to her all my sorrow and misery vanished completely and I felt a supreme serenity of mind which I had never experienced before. Oh! Those days were spent in heavenly bliss and joy'.

One day, at the Mother's place at Jayrambati, a beggar came and sang a Bengali song, to the accompaniment of violin. A free English rendering of the song is given below:

'O Mother Umā, what glad tidings there are!  
I hear from people, O Mother; tell me the truth, Shivāni.  
Is your name Annapurna in the holy city of Kāshi?  
O Aparna, when I delivered you in marriage to Bholānāth,  
He was then a beggar for a morsel of food.  
O Shubhankari, what happy news I hear today!  
You are now the Goddess of the Universe, seated on the left of the God of the Universe.  
My Digambar was called mad, a queer fellow; I then suffered humiliation and opprobrium from the public as well as from my own

people at home.

Now I learn there are guards at the gate of the palace of Digambar,  
And even Indra, Chandra, and Yama cannot see Him.

I believe you are enriched now;  
Otherwise why is Gauri so vain  
That she does not care to see her child with her eyes,  
And turns her face away at the mention of Rādhika's<sup>10</sup> name?

When the beggar finished singing the song, Girish Ghosh, Swami Niranjanananda, and others who heard it could not restrain their tears. The Mother too, with all her women companions, was shedding tears. It recalled the story of the early life of the Holy Mother, when Sri Ramakrishna was often referred to as the 'mad son-in-law' by the people of Jayrambati and its neighbourhood, when her own parents repented giving her in marriage to Sri Ramakrishna and her neighbours pitied her and expressed sorrow at her 'miserable' fate. She did not and could not then protest, and she humbly suffered all those humiliating remarks, in silence, though she knew in her innermost heart that her husband was a God-intoxicated man, far above ordinary people. She then tasted divine bliss whenever she came in contact with him. She did not go to anybody's house and she never attended any social function lest people should pass humiliating remarks against her husband and blame it on her ill luck. Now that Sri Ramakrishna is revered as a prophet and an Avatara and is worshipped in many places, people come to her for her *darśan* even in that remote village which is situated in an out-of-the-way place. The Holy Mother is now regarded by many devotees as the Mother of the Universe.

The song drew tears from the eyes of the audience as it aptly applied to and conjured up a vision of the early life of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Saradamani Devi (the Holy Mother). I heard from Girish Ghosh that for over an hour all remained spell-bound and their eyes glistened with tears.

<sup>9</sup> Sri Ramakrishna's native village.

<sup>10</sup> Radhika is the name of the composer of the song.



The happy days came to an end. After Kāli Puja, we heard that Mother was leaving for Jayrambati. On the day of her departure Girish Ghosh came to bid farewell. He did not utter anything, and with a serious countenance he called Yogananda and went direct to the Holy Mother. We all followed him. Full of emotion and deep reverence, he prostrated at the feet of the Holy Mother and with folded hands said, 'Mother, when I come to you I think that I am a *little* child coming to its own mother. Had I been a "grown-up" son, then I would have served my mother. But it is quite the opposite; you serve us and we do not serve you. You are going to Jayrambati to serve the people, even by cooking food for others in that village-kitchen. How can I serve you and what do I know about service of the Divine Mother?' His voice was choked and his whole face was red with emotion. He again said, 'Mother, you know our minds which we ourselves do not know. We cannot go to you. It is through your mercy and kindness that you come here to see your children. Whenever you wish to come here, please do

not hesitate for a moment and we, your children, will always be happy to see our Mother and shall deem it a privilege to render you whatever service you will graciously allow us to do'. He, then, addressed us who were standing behind him: 'It is difficult for human beings to believe that God may incarnate in a human form like any of us. Can you realize that you are standing before the Mother of the Universe in the form of a village woman? Can you imagine the Divine Mother doing all kinds of domestic and social duties like any ordinary woman? Yet she is the Mother of the Universe—*mahā-māyā*, *mahā-śakti*—appearing on earth for the salvation of all creatures and at the same time to exemplify the ideal of true motherhood'. His utterances made a deep impression on all present and the whole atmosphere was surcharged with serene sublimity and calmness. Yes, it was then a veritable paradise, pervaded with spiritual bliss and benediction.

We accompanied the Mother to the railway station. She blessed us all as we touched her feet in salutation.

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GOSPEL OF STRENGTH

BY JIBENDRA

'We want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads'. (Swami Vivekananda). For centuries, before this memorable utterance

was made, we had drifted helplessly along in the rushing currents of time, and a slavery of the most abject kind, both inner and outer, was the result. The language of the Upanishads is no longer a living and spoken language, and it may well be the effort of a whole life for a vast majority of us to acquire such knowledge of Sanskrit as would enable us to profit by the study of the Upanishads. In Vivekananda, on the other hand, we have a Rishi who addresses us in a language that, being familiar to a vast majority of us,—a language that is strong, living, and growing,—meets



with a straight and ready response in our heart and mind. In the recent and familiar history of the world, no man has done more to re-iterate and revive the gospel of strength that is to be found in our ancient literature. That gospel, as given to us by Vivekananda, is to be found scattered throughout the eight volumes of his matchless and immortal works. This article can at best serve as a short introduction to this vast and momentous subject, and those who, like ourselves, are aware of their human weaknesses and limitations and sincerely seek a remedy for them, are earnestly recommended to go straight to the source for a direct and living inspiration. We can only fragmentarily quote him here to illustrate our point, and thus do but scant and partial justice to what systematically studied and followed in life can never fail to rouse the sleeping lion, the Atman in us.

What you call man is a slave,' says Vivekananda. Why? Because 'if a man has a few kind words said to him, he begins to smile, and when he hears a few harsh words, he begins to weep. He is a slave to a bit of bread, to a breath of air; a slave to dress, a slave to patriotism, to country, to name and fame. He is thus in the midst of slavery and the real Man has become buried within, through his bondage'. The slavery to physical nature man understands often enough, though not always, to some extent; heat and cold, hunger and thirst, pleasure and pain, and the various other dualities that affect him through his lowest part, the body. Others that affect him through feelings and desires, such as victory and defeat, success and failure, love and hatred, grief and joy, anger, envy, jealousy, and various likes and dislikes are a little more difficult to understand because of man's self-identification with these movements of the vital nature. This self-identification of man with the movements of Nature constitutes his life of ego and ignorance, and it is the mother of all the miseries of life. He regards them as his own, as part of himself, and does not realize that they are something foreign and extraneous to his real being that

has yet somehow laid a firm hold on him. It is only when he can detach and dissociate himself from these movements of Nature and stand aside as a mental witness that he can initially have some knowledge and, therefore, control over his vital and physical nature. To have that mastery it is necessary to grow into the full stature of our mental being. Otherwise we are destined for ever to remain the slaves of Nature. 'That growth into the full mental being', says Sri Aurobindo, 'is the first transitional movement towards human perfection and freedom; it does not actually perfect, it does not liberate the soul, but it lifts us one step out of the material and vital absorption and prepares the loosening of the hold of the Ignorance'.

'When one realizes all this slavery, then comes the desire to be free, an intense desire comes. If a piece of burning charcoal be placed on a man's head, see how he struggles to throw it off. Similar will be the struggles for freedom of a man who really understands that he is a slave of Nature'. If this is so, then what is the way out? How can we assert our innate and eternal freedom? Vivekananda took his stand on the highest principle of our existence, viz. Advaita Vedanta, i.e. Vedantic Monism, and offered us that as a panacea for all the ills of life. 'This is the one prayer,' says he, 'to remember our true nature, the God who is always within us, thinking of it always as infinite, almighty, ever good, ever beneficent, selfless, bereft of all limitations. And because that nature is selfless, it is strong and fearless; *for only to selfishness comes fear*. He who has nothing to desire for himself, whom does he fear? And what can frighten him?' What does Advaita teach us? That there is nothing beyond the One; that all this is Brahman; that this Self is Brahman and that 'I am He'. 'I am one with the universe, born one. It is self-evident to my senses that I am one with the universe. ...I am one with That. This is all the worship of the Impersonal, and what is the result? The life of man will be changed. Strength, strength is what we want so much in this life,



for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance and with ignorance comes misery'. The knowledge and practice of Advaita can thus make us strong and free us from the bondage of Nature—of even the highest Sāttvika, to mention nothing of the Rājasika and Tāmasika natures. 'The secret of Advaita', continues Vivekananda, 'is—Believe in yourself first, and then believe in anything else. In the history of the world you will find that only those nations that have believed in themselves have become great and strong. In the history of each nation you will find that only those individuals who have believed in themselves have become great and strong'.

Now that we have got his prescription for the all-pervasive disease of weakness common to all humanity, let us turn our attention to Vivekananda's concept of strength; because without a firm hold on that concept, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to carry out his precepts in practice. Ordinarily we do not associate the powers of calm, forbearance, and restraint with our concept of strength. Any external manifestation of power, however rash and unrestrained it may be, the power of the vital, physical, and mental man, is construed by us to be the sign of strength. Thus one who can give a blow for blow, an aggressor or a bully or a mentally, vitally, or physically active man is looked upon by us as strong. But this is entirely wrong. This is well illustrated by Vivekananda. The mind has three states or qualities: the state of dullness and inertia (*tamas*); the state of desire and activity (*rajas*), whose motive is power and enjoyment; and the state of serenity (*sattva*), calm, balance, and harmony between the states of inactivity and activity represented by *tamas* and *rajas*. 'It is the greatest manifestation of power to be calm. It is easy to be active. Let the reins go, and the horses will run away with you. Any one can do that, but he who can stop the plunging horses is the strong man. Which requires the greater strength, letting go or restraining? The calm man is not the man who is dull. You must not mistake *sattva*

for 'dullness or laziness. The calm man is the one who has control over the mind waves. Activity is the manifestation of inferior strength, calmness of the superior'. This again has been beautifully illustrated in the following figure. 'Picture the self to be the rider and this body the chariot, the intellect to be the charioteer, mind the reins, and the senses the horses. He whose horses (the senses) are well broken, and whose reins (the mind) are strong and kept well in the hands of the charioteer (the intellect), reaches the goal which is the state of Him, the omnipresent. But the man whose horses are not controlled, nor the reins well managed, goes to destruction. This Atman in all beings does not manifest Himself to the eyes or the senses, but those whose minds have become purified and refined realize Him'.

'What makes the difference between God and man, between the saint and the sinner? Only ignorance.... Ignorance makes all the difference. For inside that little crawling worm is lodged infinite power and knowledge and purity, the infinite divinity of God Himself. It is unmanifested, and it will have to be manifested. This is the only great truth India has to teach to the world, because it is nowhere else. This is spirituality, the science of the soul. What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness; weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word, *fearlessness*. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness. Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery, fear that brings death, fear that breeds evil. And what causes fear? Ignorance of our nature. ...According to the Advaita, you are God Himself.... This idea of oneness is the great lesson India has to give'.

Again, 'We think of many things and never do them; parrot-like thinking has become a habit with us, and never doing. What is the



cause of that? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the *Gita*.... You will understand the *Gita* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty

genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men... The only 'ism' that we require now is this wonderful idea of the soul—its eternal might, its eternal strength, its eternal purity, and its eternal perfection'.

## THE GOOD LAW

BY DR. M. HAFIZ SYED

One of the essential features of the Divine, as acknowledged and understood by almost all the schools of philosophy and religion, is its eternity. The Divine Self is ever existent, unborn, perpetual, eternal, and ancient. The outer world, which is the expression of the Divine Will, owes its existence, rise, and fall to the fact that it is the thought-form of Ishvara. That is why it is admitted by all Scientists that matter (*Prakṛti*) is indestructible. The outer form of matter may change, but in the last analysis of its elements that go to make its structure it is never destroyed. Its component particles exist for ever.

As the Supreme Reality, called by various names, is eternal by nature, so the laws governing it are also eternal. This eternity and inviolability is the surest guarantee of success in every domain of our life.

Another aspect of the divine law is evolution. This law of evolution holds good in promoting and developing the physical and moral forces that govern our life.

We are already familiar, in science, with the conception of the whole universe as an expression of energy. The electron is a storehouse of energy; so too, though on a much larger scale, is a star.

Now, all the force which we use on all the

planes is the energy of Ishvara. We are but transformers of that energy. As we thus transform and use that energy, it is His desire that we use it to further His plan of evolution. When we help that plan our action is 'good' and when we hinder it our action is 'evil'. Since we use His force all the time, we can at each moment either help or hinder that divine plan.

What is popularly called Karma is the law of causation, i.e. of cause and effect. It was put thus, pointedly, by St. Paul, 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'. Man is continually sending out forces on all the planes on which he functions. These forces—themselves, in quantity and quality, the effects of his past activities—are the causes which he sets going in each world he inhabits. They bring about certain definite effects both on himself and on others, and as these causes radiate forth from himself as centre over the whole field of his activity, he is responsible for the results they bring about.

Man can become the master of his destiny only because that destiny lies in a realm of law.

This divine law has three main aspects so far as a man's actions in the past, the



present, and the future are concerned. What is called the storehouse of a man's Karma is the accumulation of the results of his activities from the time he has become conscious of himself and of his responsibility to others. A portion from this storehouse is given out by the Lord of Karma to be worked out in one life in the form of pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and enjoyment and suffering. The existence of these two types of Karma can by no means paralyse a man's individual will. He is free to choose and shape his life in any way he likes, but the causes set up by him may not bring about the result immediately. We know it well that every cause must have its effect in due course of time. That is our sense of security and hope for the future.

The law made by man is based on the result of his experiences according to the exigencies of time. We all know that human civilization and human society grow gradually in proportion to the growth of man. The primitive people had not made adequate progress in their social or intellectual life. In proportion as they had outgrown their savagery and trodden the path of civilization, from age to age, the laws made by the *elect* of society have to undergo changes according to the need of the time. Man-made laws should be based on justice and equity which are admitted to be the very soul of moral standards.

Mutability is the law of our being. No human law has been enforced for all time to come. Therefore, sensible people, under-

standing the working of the divine law, do not break their heart or shed tears if and when they come face to face with new changes in the working of a certain type of law made by man. The law enacted by man is subject to change and transformation because it is man who makes it at one time, utilizes it to its fullest limit, and is prepared to discard or eliminate it according to the need of the time. This ideal is also in keeping with the divine law. A man shares divine life, being himself a part of God. God's first function is the creation, then preservation, and finally dissolution of an object in the phenomenal world. It is man who gives rise to certain institutions, and when he finds them effete and outworn he naturally discards them. Understanding the working of this law, a man should ever be prepared to face radical changes in the social or political institutions which owe their existence to his genius and creative faculty. In all civilized countries it is freely admitted that law-makers must not break the law. In other words, they must respect it and make every effort to enforce it. It is the duty of every citizen to co-operate with the law of the State and not violate it deliberately.

As a man progresses from time to time, one fixed law made by him cannot hold good for all time. That is why every system of law has undergone changes from age to age. When we are once convinced that laws are based upon common sense and the need of the times, they must be respected and adhered to without any let or hindrance.

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'We, by turn, are made by law and make it. A generalization of what man does invariably in certain circumstances is a law with regard to man in that particular aspect. It is the invariable, universal human action that is law for man—and which no individual can escape—and yet the summation of the action of each individual is the universal Law. The sum total, or the universal, or the infinite, is fashioning the individual, while the individual is keeping by its action the Law alive. Law in this sense is another name for the universal. The universal is dependent upon the individual, the individual dependent upon the universal.

—Swami Vivekananda



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

*The Parrot and the Monk* is one of the countless little stories told over the length and breadth of India, by both the learned and the unlearned, to illustrate the vital truths of spiritual life. . . .

No sane thinker or writer of modern times would regard the 'East' and the 'West' as two rigidly disparate entities or exalt one at the expense of the other. The need to think in terms of universal values and address oneself to the task of effectively aiding the human situation as a whole is more urgent today than ever. And the philosophy of education plays a great part in achieving this task. No education worth the name could ever remain unrelated to life itself. Thus the philosophy of education bears a close relationship to the fundamental values of civilization and the concept of man they give rise to. In India the emphasis on the primacy of the Spirit and the fundamental unity of existence has consistently shaped the course of thought and action. As Swami Vivekananda has pointed out, man is divine and education is the manifestation of the perfection already inherent in man. It is a happy sign of the growing unification of mankind that attention has been focussed on *The Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West* as a result of the U.N.E.S.C.O. symposia and also mutual discussions by renowned scholars of the East and the West. The learned and thought-provoking contribution on this subject by Dr. S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D., of the Banaras Hindu University, will, we are sure, be read with profound interest. Making a plea for a healthy East-West synthesis and understanding, Dr. Maitra has clearly and lucidly presented the characteristic spiritual outlook and intuitive dynamism of India—which in more ways than one is truly representative of the East. . . .

Swami Nikhilananda, Leader of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, impressively summarizes the *Practical Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita*. . . .

The second instalment of the *Reminiscences of the Holy Mother*, by Sri Kumud Bandhu Sen, are as inspiring as they are instructive.

### IDEALS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

A nation derives its distinct individuality, which animates and sustains its soul, from the culture that forms its great heritage. This cultural *elan* gives each nation its historical continuity, making the nation a live entity, able to maintain itself in the face of even political and economic enthrallment. The individual in a nation forms the unit of its cultural consciousness and, therefore, for the preservation and propagation of its culture a society should strive to instil its best ideals in every citizen. Hence we find the nations of the world assiduously fostering such educational ideals and values as will ensure for the alumni a complete and correct education in an atmosphere not unfamiliar to their own national culture-patterns.

The leaders of society in ancient India evolved the *gurukula* system of education, where the teacher and the taught lived under the same roof, the disciple imbibing the lofty ideals of education through direct and intimate contact with the master. This unique system was the basis for the sustenance of India's cultural continuity and characterized its rich civilization. The tenacity with which India clung to the treasures of her spiritual culture and thereby produced, in spite of immense odds, great spiritual personalities, is indicative of the power and vitality of her cultural framework.

The vicissitudes of history rudely interrupted the course of her educational processes. Owing to alien conquest and other obvious causes, the Indian citizen was deprived of an



education rooted in his own historic past. Most educational institutions, under the British rule in India, turned out *well-lettered* but culturally ignorant individuals, wanted only to man the vast administrative machinery. Its advantages apart, this naturally led to the gradual denationalization of the people, almost depriving the youth of its will to resist the lure of Westernization.

Now that India is free,—free to shape her destiny in her own way,—there is wide scope for the reorientation of her educational system so as to enable the educational institutions produce true sons of the soil and not native models of any exotic culture. This view was powerfully voiced by the Hon'ble Sri Bijan Kumar Mukherji, Judge, Supreme Court of India, in his last Convocation Address to the Gurukula Vishvavidyalaya, Kangri, Hardwar:

'Speaking broadly and in the language of a layman, every scheme of education can be said to have a double aspect, and is calculated to serve a twofold purpose; one is the cultural, ideal, or social aspect, while the other is the economic or utilitarian one. Both are interconnected and the choice of subjects upon which instructions should be given to the students would have to be determined with reference to both these purposes. As regards the cultural side of education, it may be said that the proper system of teaching in a country should be inspired by the best ideals of its national character; it must be able to bear upon the pupils *the spiritual forces which are typical of the national ethos* and to train them to take their part in conserving and developing their national life'.

In opposition to the soul-killing system, many great sons and daughters of India repeatedly formulated systems of national education, with ideals inspired by the Vedic culture. Character, the sense of oneness with the people of the country, and legitimate pride in one's cultural heritage were sought to be inculcated in the pupil through a balanced system of education. The national revival all round caused India's best minds, educated on the Western model, to turn to their traditional moorings for inspiration and strength. Fortunately for India, this tide of national regeneration did not *pari passu* give rise to any positive hatred of everything alien, thanks to

the great teachings of many a liberal Indian thinker or leader of international repute. Sri Ramakrishna preached complete tolerance and harmony of religions. Swami Vivekananda envisaged an exchange of ideals between the East and the West and welcomed the nation-building activities of the West. Mahatma Gandhi lived and worked for the establishment of a stable human understanding between India and the rest of the world. Justice Mukherji, laying special emphasis on this aspect of education, observed:

' . . . We must certainly move with the time and adapt ourselves to the progressive needs of the modern world. It was because of our adaptability and our powers of assimilation that our culture attained such unique strength and greatness in the past, and the progress virtually ceased when, owing to political and historical reasons, these powers of adaptability were gone. The inventions of modern science have annihilated all distances of time and space and we are in close touch with all the cultural currents of the world. Let us adopt and assimilate whatever is best in them, but the culture we should build up must be innately our own, suited to the spirit and genius of our people with its roots deep down in the fundamentals of our civilization. What we want therefore is an educational synthesis which will absorb all that we find good and useful in the modern world, and which will blend together the old and the new, the cultural and the economic aspects of education. . . . '

If our aim to build a stable and cultured society, free from the fret and fume of a mechanized civilization—as in the West, is to be achieved, the structure of education in India should be based on the traditional man-making, character-building *gurukula* system. This will not only be in keeping with the real genius of India, but also not strain the financial resources of the educated.

' . . . The main object of education is undoubtedly the formation of character and mere intellectual training is insufficient for that purpose. . . . True benefit will be attained when by education a state of mind can be produced to which proper behaviour would be natural, spontaneous, and instinctive. . . . Elimination of the corrupting influences of ordinary city life, contact with men of high ideals and character, and systematic cultivation of the



feelings of devotion, respect, and brotherly love are the best means conceivable to strengthen the moral forces of man and elevate his mind and character. The residential system of teaching is now acclaimed to be one of the best methods of imparting education; but residential teaching in the modern style is a most costly affair which in a poor country like ours can be availed of only by a few. It may be possible in a somewhat larger scale only if the *guru-kula* way of plain and simple living is adopted'.

### THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

In his illuminating Presidential Address on the occasion of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna held at the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, in February last, the Hon'ble U Win, Minister for Home, Defence, and Religious Affairs, Government of Burma, drew attention to the inspiring and instructive content of Sri Ramakrishna's life and message. After touching briefly upon the main incidents of Sri Ramakrishna's life, U Win pointed out how the Master's message infused a new life and meaning into the religious consciousness of humanity:

'... The cultural aspect of Bengal was that of a mad imitation of the West. In spite of that, many Indian youth gathered around him, and they had a greater faith in their country's future and the divine mission; for did not India sustain this faith and vitality, through storm and stress, to march forward all these years? ... When society and human goodwill are in a state of decay, and morality and spirituality are on the ebb, the Great Divine One comes to this earth to redeem humanity from degeneration and ruin. Long after the era of the Upanishads, when discontent, disorder, and social and moral upheavals marked the day, Sri Ramakrishna, with his clarion call, once more revived

the teachings of the Upanishads, giving his own interpretation of the constructive forces of the world'.

The sublime touch of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) transformed the agnostic youth Narendra Nath into the world teacher Swami Vivekananda, who made the Master's message a power for the uplift of not only the individual but also society at large. U Win observed:

'... The great storehouse of philosophical knowledge of ancient India was within his (Sri Ramakrishna's) reach. In his native tongue he roused their latent meanings and brought home to the listeners understanding and conception. Many of the young men's minds were lost in the intricacies of philosophical speculation. When, however, they had an opportunity to hear him, truth came to them in unmistakable terms. One of those was his great disciple Swami Vivekananda, who could find no rest till he could bring the great message of his Master to the world. He set a gigantic reconstructive programme in motion to awaken India to her consciousness of a world mission. Wherever his mission was carried out, we could find Ramakrishna Deva smiling to give it a touch of Divinity'.

The learned speaker was unequivocal in expressing his view that Sri Ramakrishna's liberal teachings should be applied in our individual and collective life in order to tide over the present crisis in the history of humanity:

'The world today is torn between various conflicting ideologies adding thereby to the sum total of human misery in our already all too trouble-stricken world. It behoves all of us, therefore, to realize the principles propounded by the great Teacher in our daily lives. The peace of the world today and the happiness of millions of people inhabiting this earth, now so gravely threatened by the conflicts between the powerful nations of the world, cannot be achieved without active realization of the truth of the Message of the Master—"All paths lead to God".'

'You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in another religion. I should reply: Suppose there are. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to love Him and feel attracted to Him. Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide? He sees the longing of our heart and the yearning of our soul. ... the devotees call on God alone, though by different names. They call on one Person only. God is one, but His names are many.'

—Sri Ramakrishna



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THOUGHTS IN CURRENT PHILOSOPHY.  
BY CHUNILAL MITRA. Published by Indu Bhushan Ghosh, 30 Talpukur Road, Calcutta 10. Pages 131. Price Rs. 2-8.

The book is a collection of fifteen essays on diverse subjects. There are seven essays on metaphysics, four on religious questions, two on ethical problems, and two on social problems. They are all knit together by a common purpose, though apparently independent of one another. Four of these essays were originally published as articles in the *Prabuddha Bharata* some years ago, and some others appeared in other Indian periodicals at various times.

First, to consider the essays on metaphysics: The general trend of this group of essays reveals that apart from his rejection of Neo-Hegelian Idealism and Objective Idealism, he has been at pains to minimize, if not disprove, the validity of Advaita Vedanta. That *nirguṇa* is itself a *guṇa*, that Brahman or Reality is always qualified, that there is also an immortality of the body, and that the 'true' spiritual life is 'this-worldly' life, are some of the conclusions of the first essay. This in essence is a way of rehabilitating materialism under a new guise; and yet we are told that this is spiritualism. After a review of the various theories of evolution, we are brought to accept the Sāṅkhya account of evolution. The Prakṛiti of Sāṅkhya is identified with Māyā of Vedanta, though in a separate essay the author rejects the doctrine of Maya. An imposing list of fourteen objections against Maya is given.

That the Māyāvāda is Shankara's creation is the cheap gibe hurled against the great thinker. A cursory glance at *Vivaraṇa* will tell us that there is a Rik in *Ṛg-Veda* where we hear that *nīhāra* (frost) has enveloped the finite universe, whence we live in error and ignorance. Those trained on European lines require the very word 'Maya' in the Vedas, while those of us who need the content of the doctrine are satisfied not with the occurrence of the word but with the emphasis on the content of the doctrine in the Vedas. This Mayavada does not make the Many illusory or unreal. In this connection we have to point out that Vāchaspati has interpreted '*ananyatva*' not as identity but as the absence of any difference. And in the famous Ahamkāra-tikā in *Vivaraṇa*, we are told how the Many come into existence through the self-determination of the Real. The *aham* (self) is the first *adhyāsa*, the *idam* (this) is the next, and the *mama* (mine) is the third. From these and other evidences

it is quite clear that Maya is the principle of individuation or contradiction. It makes out that the Many are not unreal, but only appearances or modes of the universal Self-consciousness. That this is the true interpretation of the spiritual principle is evident to any one who cares to read *Bhāmatī* or *Vivaraṇa*. The author exhibits total indifference to a genuine understanding of the Mayavada. But, in his essay on Sri Aurobindo, he seems to have a vague intimation of the truth (pp. 112-113). Yet, his love for this ever-changing finite world colours his interpretations of intuition, progress, and value. Regarding Bosanquet's Theory of Value also the author errs profoundly. Bosanquet argues that Self-consciousness is the clue to Reality, and that the Values are also the clues to Reality. That is, Self-consciousness is the supreme value, and like all values it is both spiritual and human in a subject. Or, as Green would say, we have to realize universal Self-consciousness as a Person, that is, as the true Individual.

On the question of the General Will, the author finds fault with Bradley's 'My Station and its Duties'. The common error which all critics of Bradley's *Ethical Studies* commit is to take this chapter as representing Bradley's final position; and this is not to understand a dialectician. This chapter is followed by one on 'Ideal Morality', where Bradley advocates a non-social (in other words, trans-social) ideal as being higher than the purely social one. A patience which can take us up to the fifth chapter of Bradley ought to take us also to the sixth. Moreover, when we grant that a spiritual basis is necessary and inevitable for ethics, we cannot run away from Green's Eternal Consciousness of which we are all modes; and then one can will not only for oneself but also for others, because there is no 'other', there is nothing outside of this Consciousness which is one's true being. This is the basis of the General Will and this basis has not been touched upon by the author or by the critics cited by the author. And yet they feel satisfied with rejecting the General Will.

To touch upon one more point of interest: It is on Crime, which one of the essays deals with. If I have committed a crime, it means that I affirm something in me which does not truly belong to me. I attribute to myself something which I cannot and should not. Punishment does not destroy this something, but only transforms it into something higher. This is the contention of Green and Bradley and also of our major Dharma-Shāstras. The author seems to have missed this point.



The essays dealing with Prayer and The Actuals of Religion are well written and deserve to be closely read. The essays on Civilization, War, and the Vedas present a good and commendable approach to those questions.

There are many misprints in the work and we hope that they will be removed from the next edition.

P. S. SASTRI

CASTE IN INDIA. By J. H. HUTTON. *Published by Oxford University Press. Mercantile Buildings, Calcutta—1. Pages 325. Price Rs. 10.*

This is a revised edition of the book first published in 1946 by the Cambridge University Press. At a time when caste is being denounced it is necessary to peruse such works which look at the Indian social problem in a detached way. The author was till recently Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1909 to 1936. He directed the 1931 Census of India and published the Report on it in 1933.

The author shows how the social and economic order known as caste had a complex origin. The work is not theory-ridden and does not sport a mere hobby. It is an open-minded and well-balanced estimate of a social phenomenon found among a great people who live in a great country and form one-fifth of the world's population. The author says, 'It (the population) is composed of all sorts of different elements of great diversity, of different creeds, different customs, and even different colours. All these varied peoples have been enabled to live together, in conditions of comparative stability and forming what may be described as a multiple society, by the caste system. . . . It has proved capable of absorbing any intrusive society and no intruders have yet succeeded in revolutionizing it, though it is not so rigid that a "caste" cannot rise in the social scale'.

The fact is that though there may be 'three thousand' sub-castes and 'thirty' different groups of languages, there is one culture common to all of them and we have here a clear case of unity in diversity. The author begins with South India, where the languages are Dravidian and the country has not been liable to frequent invasions and incursions, then proceeds to deal with Western, Central, and Eastern India, and finally describes North India. He says, 'Like caste, *varṇa* is to some extent fluid'. He describes the division into Right Hand castes and Left Hand castes and says that the Brahmanas do not belong to either division. The author then proceeds to deal with the diverse caste regulations about food, etc. Wilson says, 'It interferes, in short, with all the relations and events of life, and with what proceeds and follows life'.

Thus a caste is a social unit with its own internal customs and disciplines and rules. The author has examined all the factors which have led to the emergence and development of the caste system (pages 182-190). The author observes, 'The one important function of caste, perhaps the most important of all its functions, and the one which above all others makes caste in India a unique institution, is, or has been, to integrate Indian society, to weld into one community the various competing if not incompatible groups composing it'. He points out how the Negroes in the U.S.A. have been an unadjusted population and how the European and the non-European in South Africa are totally segregated. He says, 'The caste system has effectively dealt with problems such as these which other societies have failed to solve. Abbe Dubois had already pointed out this feature and said that the caste system of the Hindus was 'the happiest effort of their legislation', and was the sure basis of orderly government and a defence against despotism and a means of preserving the Hindu arts and the Hindu pattern of culture. In fact the caste is to the nation what the cell is to the organism. Caste has enabled the passing on of crafts and skills from generation to generation.

The modern age demands that the social system in India should be integrated with modern progress. It must not become a source of national weakness or substitute loyalty to caste for loyalty to nation. Untouchability has been already removed by Mahatma Gandhi's efforts culminating in the specific declaration of its removal in the Indian Constitution.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

THE GOSPEL OF CHINA. *Pages 247. Price Rs. 3-12; Cloth-bound Rs. 5.*

THE GOSPEL OF HERMES. *Pages 326. Price Rs. 4-8; Cloth-bound Rs. 5-8. BOTH BY DUNCAN GREENLEES. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.*

The Theosophical Publishing House is bringing out suitable books under the series styled 'The World Gospel Series'. The two Gospels under review are the second and third books in the series.

*The Gospel of China* is based on a new translation from a French version of the four great Confucian classics, with explanatory notes on each section and a brief introduction on the life, philosophy, and works of Confucius and Mencius. The world knows very little about Confucius, one of the noblest souls of the world, and the wise Mencius. This ignorance appears paradoxical when one realizes the fact that 'the teachings of Confucius and his great disciples are the foundation of the whole vast and ancient culture of the peoples of



China'. This book, containing the sublime thoughts and wisdom of China, is therefore welcome.

Confucius did not develop any system of ethics or philosophy, but simply taught the 'Way' to Truth and wisdom, to good and virtue,—in short, the way to perfection. It is the way of sincerity, of love, and of purity. It is the way of identifying our individual self with the Universal Self—a realization of the truth that the *jīvātmā* and the *paramātmā* are one in essence. The similarity of these teachings with the teachings of the sages of India is striking. It shows clearly that the basic religious experiences and spiritual teachings of all the seers of the world, in different times and climes, are almost identical.

'Hermes' is the Greek god of mind and wisdom. All teachings and writings inspired by divine wisdom are said to be taught and written by Hermes himself; and *The Gospel of Hermes* is a collection, with introduction, notes, etc., of the teachings emanating from the 'divine wisdom', realized and taught by the great anonymous seers of ancient Egypt. There is one God, they declared; and all things exist in Him, who is their source and life. So there is no death in the universe.

To quote from the inspiring words of Hermes: 'Expand yourself to the same extent as the immeasurable Greatness; leap out of all body, and transcend all Time; become Eternity, and you shall perceive God. Realize that to you nothing is impossible; believe yourself immortal and able to grasp all things—every art, every science, and the way of every living creature'. These words clearly echo the eternal message contained in the *Gita* and the Upanishads. The book will prove itself to be of much interest and value towards a comparative and sympathetic study of the religions of the world. The author's critical and scholarly introduction, and his notes, with apt parallels from different other sources, are helpful to and suggestive of further studies in the line.

A. K. BANERJI

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS. (1900-1950). Pages 87. Price Rs. 3-8.

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Banaras, illustrate the noble principles of renunciation and service so ably propounded by Swami Vivekananda as the national ideals of India. This Souvenir brings together, in addition to thought-provoking contributions on some fundamental aspects of Swami Vivekananda's teachings, the Messages received on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebrations in March 1952 and Extracts from the visitors' book since the inception of the Sevashrama. The Souvenir is appropriately prefaced by a short, well written account entitled 'Ramakrishna Mission: its Background'.

Among those whose Messages are printed here, mention may be made of Srimat Swami Sankarananda Maharaj, President Ramakrishna Mission and Math, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President, Republic of India, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister, and Governors of some States. The Extracts from the visitors' book, included in the Souvenir, contain high tributes to the humanitarian activities of the Sevashrama from such eminent personages as G. K. Gokhale, B. G. Tilak, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Sir P. C. Ray, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and others. Some of the esteemed contributors are: Sri Rohit Mehta, General Secretary, Theosophical Society (Indian Section), Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, and Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta. The Souvenir was edited by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Principal, College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University.

The high quality of the articles, the many plates illustrating the various activities of the Sevashrama, and the nice get-up make the Souvenir a worthy symbol of the great occasion it commemorates.

The Souvenir is obtainable from the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Laxa, Banaras and Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta—13.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS REPORT FOR 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, has completed the forty-seventh year of its useful career at the end of 1951. The following is a brief report on the working of the Home for the year 1951.

The Home has three distinct sections,—the Collegiate, the Technical, and the Secondary. The

latter two are self-contained units and provide both residential and instructional facilities, whereas in the case of the first the Home provides boarding, lodging, and supervision only. Admissions are restricted to the poorest among the best, merit being the chief guiding factor in the selection. It is a free Home and paying boarders come in only as exceptions. The numbers of boarders in the three sections at the end of the year under review were 42, 69, and 157 respectively. About 40 per



cent of the students were in receipt of scholarships and concessions towards school and college fees.

The Seva-praveena Samiti and the various other Associations of the student inmates in the different sections worked commendably. The Tamil Sangham brought out a manuscript magazine and the Automobile Engineering Association issued a printed Annual. The Home Union, comprising all the inmates, was revived during the year. Special religious classes and discourses were arranged for the benefit of the students. Bhajans and Pujas were held, and religious festivals were also observed. The maintenance of the Progress Register for each boy, which had been suspended on account of paper scarcity, was revived.

The General Library and Reading Room contained 3,100 books and received about 26 periodicals.

*University Education:* Of the 42 students in the Collegiate Section, 31 were in the Vivekananda College and 11 in other Colleges in the city. All the 15 students who appeared for various examinations passed, 10 of them securing first class. 32 students received scholarships and fee concessions.

*Technical Education:* The Ramakrishna Mission Technical Institute prepares students for the L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering) Diploma. The course extends over a period of three years. The Workshop, attached to the Institute for practical training, is fully equipped and is up to date. 8 students, out of the 27 who appeared for the L.A.E. Examination, passed. 9 students were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions. The Institute has a library of its own which contained 741 books.

*Secondary Education:* The Residential High School (Athur Camp) had a strength of 161 including 4 day-scholars. The construction of an additional storey over the main building of the Home in Madras,—providing seats for 93 students and meant specially for the High School when it is shifted from Athur Camp,—was completed. The High School could not be shifted as the new flat had to be presently used for accommodating the students of the Technical Institute. 26 students appeared for the S.S.L.C. Public Examination and 23 were declared eligible. It is worthy of note that more than 50 per cent of the pupils were in receipt of scholarships and fee concessions. The school library contained 6,200 books. Spinning, weaving, carpentry, and gardening continued to serve as crafts and hobbies for all the pupils, outside school hours.

*Elementary Education:* The Home has under its management two elementary schools—one in Mylapore and one in the village of Malliankaranai, the latter catering specially to the needs of backward classes, with a free Harijan Hostel attached

to it. The Centenary Elementary School, Mylapore, had a strength of 326 (221 boys and 105 girls). The Ramakrishna Mission Higher Elementary School and Harijan Hostel, Malliankaranai (in Uttiramerur), had 171 boys and 30 girls at the end of the year. The Harijan Hostel, started in 1947 and attached to the School, had 25 boarders.

*Finance:* The running of all the sections cost the Management Rs. 1,62,303-4-0 while the receipts amounted to Rs. 1,48,501-13-3, resulting in a deficit of Rs. 13,801-6-9.

To meet the annually recurring deficit due to the all-round rise in cost of foodstuffs and other materials and for enabling it to efficiently carry on its useful activities on a sound financial basis, the Home needs liberal donations and subscriptions from the generous public. The Home also needs funds for its various construction purposes and development projects.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RAYALASEEMA FAMINE RELIEF

The Madras branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on famine relief work in Rayalaseema in the Andhra country, for some time past, with the active collaboration of the Ramakrishna Math, Rajahmundry. The following is a brief report of the work done for about seven weeks for the period ending 20th May 1952:

In the four districts of Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur, and Kurnool the Mission is operating from a network of 27 centres, of which 22 are distributing food, cooked or uncooked, 13 are distributing milk, and 7 are supplying fodder to famished cattle. Altogether 1,58,474 people were supplied with cooked or uncooked food, 49,500 children were given 5,675 lbs. of powdered or condensed milk, while Rs. 5,400 worth of fodder was supplied to cattle. In all 21 wells for drinking-water purposes were deepened and renovated and 325 new saris and 150 new dhotis were distributed. The Mission also did fire relief in four places and distributed 55 new saris and 8 bags of grain to 55 families who lost their all in fire accidents.

Though the Government is doing its best to give relief to the famine-stricken, yet there remains much to be done by the public and private organizations as the number of people affected by the famine is large. The Ramakrishna Mission urgently needs funds to make its relief work more adequate. The generous public should come to the succour of their distressed brethren at this juncture.

All contributions for the relief work will be thankfully received and acknowledged by: Swami Nityabodhananda, Ramakrishna Mission Famine Relief Centre, Revenue Club, Cuddapah.



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE DIVINE MASTER

BY STARSON GOSSE

I searched my heart and at times see  
There is nothing but thy grace and thee;  
The outer greenness and radiant glow  
Get higher significance from thy musical flow.

Peace, Joy, Bliss, and effulgence of light  
Cover the earth, and in thy pure delight,  
I roam, swim, play, and sing;  
Thy smile on me new tidings bring.

The whole life becomes a music of glow,  
A deep meaning each particle doth know;  
Each moment takes its golden hue;  
O my Master! Before I never knew.

That I am so great, so deep, so noble,  
Deathless and formless, pass through double  
Existence, into that Reality, which is One;  
Allow me to love thee, till my music is done.

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## THREE OBEDIENT DISCIPLES

There was in ancient days a sage named Ayuda Dhaumya, who had three disciples: Veda, Aruni, and Upamanyu. Because he favoured the practice of obedience as the chief means of attaining spiritual knowledge, he took great care to perfect the disciples in this practice. Thus the discipline all three received was of the same order, though the preceptor varied it somewhat in each case, according to the individual temperament and needs.

To Veda, when this disciple first came to him, he said simply, 'My child, remain in my house and serve me. It will be to your profit'. Veda accordingly took his place with Ayuda Dhaumya's family, and life became for him a steady, never-varying round of service.

Like an ox under the burden of its owner, he bore endless inconveniences and privations, doing always the will of his preceptor. He suffered much, enduring heat and cold, hunger and thirst, ever without complaint.

Many years went by before Ayuda Dhaumya was entirely pleased with him, but eventually he blessed Veda with the highest knowledge, and the disciple departed in great joy and peace.

In the case of his disciple Aruni, Ayuda Dhaumya, after disciplining him in various ways, tested and tried him in one single experience.

On a certain day Ayuda Dhaumya said to Aruni, 'Go and stop the breach in the ridge bounding my field yonder, so that the water will not run out'. The disciple at once went where he was directed, but try as he would, he could not mend the breach through which the precious water was escaping. He knew that the disciple is never excused from carrying out the preceptor's wishes, however impossible to fulfil they may seem, and thus he realized that he must somehow manage to do Ayuda Dhaumya's bidding, that no other way was open to him. So he continued to work strenuously at the broken ridge, and at the same

time he tried very hard to think of some new means by which it could really be made secure again.

But all his thought and effort were fruitless, and so at last, as the only possible means of making good what was expected of him, he laid himself down at full length in the breach, and thus by his own body the water was retained in the field and no longer went to waste.

After many hours had passed, Ayuda Dhaumya noticed Aruni's absence and inquired of his other disciples concerning his whereabouts. They replied, 'You sent him, sir, to repair the breach in the field, and he has not yet returned'. The preceptor said, 'Let us go there and find out what has happened to him', and immediately he set out with his disciples.

Arriving at the field and seeing no sign of Aruni, he cried, 'O Aruni, where are you? Come here, my child!'

At the sound of his preceptor's voice, the disciple quickly arose from the breach in the ridge and stood before him.

When he had made his respectful salutations, he said, 'Sir, since it was impossible to prevent the escape of the water in any other way, I laid myself down in the breach and there I remained until I heard you calling me to come to you. I knew that by getting up I would cause the water to escape once more, but, O revered teacher, here I am in answer to your command. Kindly instruct me what to do now'.

Ayuda Dhaumya commended Aruni highly for his obedience. 'My child', he said, 'you have won my favour'.

From that moment Aruni's spiritual progress was very rapid, and in a comparatively short time he attained to illumination.

To his disciple Upamanyu, Ayuda Dhaumya said simply, 'Go, my child, and look after my cows'. The disciple did as he was told,



but every day, according to custom, he visited his preceptor to offer him his salutations.

After a few days had passed, Ayuda Dhaumya said, 'Upamanyu, how well you are looking! Tell me, by what means do you now obtain your food?'

Upamanyu answered, 'I support myself by begging'.

'But', objected the preceptor, 'that is not right, my child. How can you appropriate the results of your begging to yourself? You should offer everything you get to me'.

The disciple carried out this instruction. Whatever he obtained by begging he brought to Ayuda Dhaumya and offered to him. And every day he went on caring for the cows.

Soon again, however, when he was standing one day before Ayuda Dhaumya, the sage scrutinized him and said, 'My child, I take from you all that you get by begging, yet it seems you are still exceedingly plump! Tell me, then, how you are at present supporting yourself'.

Upamanyu answered, 'Sir, after relinquishing to you all that I acquire by begging, I go again to beg for myself'.

'This should not be!' declared Ayuda Dhaumya. 'By so doing you are not only disobedient to me, your preceptor, but you take for yourself what would otherwise be given to other and perhaps more worthy people who live by begging'.

Upamanyu promised not to repeat his mistake, and he went back to tend the cows. True to his word, he never again begged for the second time.

A number of days passed and Ayuda Dhaumya said, 'My child, I take from you all that you get by begging, and you have ceased to go out a second time to beg for yourself. How then do you manage to live?'

'Sir', replied the disciple, 'I drink some of the milk of your cows'.

Ayuda Dhaumya now prohibited Upamanyu from subsisting in this way, and the disciple obeyed; he took no more of the cows' milk.

Before long he was again questioned by his preceptor, who said, 'Strangely enough, you

are still looking well-fed. You do not support yourself by alms, you do not go begging a second time, you do not take milk from the cows. But it is evident that you still obtain food; please tell me how you do it'.

Upamanyu said, 'I am now living on the froth that falls from the lips of the calves as they drink their mothers' milk'.

The preceptor shook his head. 'You must discontinue this practice', he said. 'Out of kindness to you the calves let too much froth fall. You are depriving them of a full meal'.

Upamanyu thereafter made his meals on various kinds of foliage. One day, feeling the pangs of hunger more intensely than ever before, he failed to exercise sufficient caution and ate the leaves of a certain tree, the noxious properties of which affected his eyes, and became blind. Unable to see his way, he stumbled and fell into a deep well.

When Upamanyu did not come to pay his respects to Ayuda Dhaumya at the close of the day, the preceptor asked his other disciples if they knew the reason for his absence.

They replied, 'He was tending the cattle. That is all we know'.

The preceptor said, 'Perhaps Upamanyu is displeased because I have forbidden his obtaining food in practically every way. He may, therefore, be purposely staying away from me. Let us go and try to find him'.

When Ayuda Dhaumya came to the place where his missing disciple customarily watched over the cows, he called out, 'Upamanyu, where are you? Come here, my child!'

Then he heard a faint voice in the distance, crying, 'Sir, I am in this well'.

Ayuda Dhaumya went quickly in the direction of the voice. Soon he discovered the spot where his disciple had fallen into the well, and he told him to come out of it.

'I cannot, sir', came the reply. 'I ate the leaves of the *arka* tree, and so have become blind'.

The preceptor now instructed the disciple to pray to the gods for help, and Upamanyu, with all faith, began chanting Vedic hymns that celebrated the splendour of the gods.



This was pleasing to all the shining beings of the celestial realms, and soon one of them revealed himself to Upamanyu. It is related that the god even asked him, as a sign of his favour, to accept a cake from him.

But Upamanyu replied, 'I beg your pardon a thousand times, but I cannot take a cake even from you, without first asking my preceptor'.

The celestial visitor said, 'Upamanyu, I bless you for your devotion to your teacher. Your sight will be restored, and you will attain to the highest goal'.

Accordingly Upamanyu was again able to

see. When he had climbed out of the well, Ayuda Dhaumya embraced him, saying that the light of all sacred knowledge would shine in him. And even as the preceptor declared, so indeed it came about. Upamanyu very soon became an illumined sage.

Thus, by various practices of obedience, the three disciples of the great sage Ayuda Dhaumya, who were by name Veda, Aruni, and Upamanyu, became, each in his own way, masters of the body and the mind and completely obliterated their ego, so that, being free of every obstruction, all attained to the resplendent knowledge of the Self, to divine fulfilment.

## THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

BY THE EDITOR

'Many are the names of God, and infinite the forms through which He may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him, through that He will be realized by you'.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

For many men and women today the importance of the values of life lies in the passing secular and material benefits they confer rather than in the lasting moral and spiritual progress they assuredly seek to promote. Such of them who take to life's adventure, seriously, while still feeling not a little sceptical about God, soul, and the unseen world, find it difficult, if not impossible, to view man and the universe as purely mechanical processes where natural forces automatically bring about changes. Life cannot be lived divested of its vital force and purpose, as a mere matter of the moment. Hence arose the humanistic philosophy which sought to conserve ethical and idealistic values without any belief in God. The existence of God as a valid objective reality is not vouched for by the application of the methods of science to the facts of religion and this has led many an

educated moderner to the realm of dogmatic atheism and godless secularism. The sensate and materialistic view of life, which is steadily breaking down the inherited spiritual traditions of man, is doubtless contributing to the growing tendency to disbelief in everything that concerns the idea of God and the truths of religion.

It has become the fashion to exaggerate the evils of irreligious acts perpetrated by fanatics under the guise of deep religious fervour and to decry faith in and love for God as the fond imaginings of weak and gullible minds. Under the sledge-hammer blows of scientific inventions and discoveries people are growing indifferent to religion and the higher interests of life. The cold logic of rationalism and intellectualism has not only strengthened the accumulating dissatisfaction with the dogmatism of established religion but also infected men's minds in such



a manner that they summarily dismiss God as a myth or the projection of a fear complex. In an age when religion is ridiculed as an 'opiate', or at best recognized as a merely social phenomenon, and when God is given the benefit of the doubt, it is no wonder that the well-founded truths of the domain of Spirit, revealed to and realized by countless seers, prophets, and mystics, are seen to be openly repudiated.

No demand of the human soul is more deep, earnest, and irrepressible than its cry for God. Man is so constituted that he cannot rest in a state of eternal disorder and disunity. He cannot rest satisfied with things ephemeral and finite. A make-believe of falsehood and illusion is discovered sooner or later and the soul seeks to express its passionate longing for the realization of That which is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Every religion has declared in more or less varying language that man's real nature is divine and man is in essence the imperishable *ātman* of undiminishing glory. God alone is real and man must live with the one end in view, viz. realization of God, which is the goal of life. From its earliest moment of conscious rational existence and all through life the soul hungers for union with and shelter under an extra-cosmic Being or Power that is in every respect stronger and more perfect than itself. As Swami Vivekananda proclaimed at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, 'Whatever may be the position of philosophy, whatever may be the position of metaphysics, so long as there is such a thing as death in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man in his very weakness, there shall be a faith in God'.

If we closely look at the world we cannot fail to realize that the Creator is ever present therein. This vast household of the created universe around us, which presents law, regularity, harmony, and unerring precision, itself stands as a telling proof against the argument that there is no intelligent Person or Power behind this cosmos to look after, regulate, and guide the facts and forces that

constitute it. 'What I cannot understand', writes Sir Francis Younghusband, 'is how any one who looks out on the world as a whole and sees all the beauty of Nature about him, and the marvels of goodness and beauty men have achieved, can doubt for an instant that a power of incalculable goodness must be at work in the heart of the universe to have produced such results'. It is common experience that the individual cares not for God's existence in the days of his prosperity and proud success, but seeks to find and earnestly pray to Him as soon as adversity and failure stare him in the face. When his actions bring him pleasure he feels elated and considers himself 'all-powerful'. Shortly after, when he receives hard knocks and feels miserable, out of his heart wells forth, in sheer despair and fear of the indefinite future, an ardent supplication to the Almighty for succour. Lack of spiritual awareness of the Supreme Self undermines confidence in oneself and man falls an easy prey to utter cynicism or godless hedonism. If the elevating experience of the all-pervading presence of God does not illumine the heart, there could possibly be no other effective means of dispelling the gloom of hate and jealousy, of violence and fraud, which repeatedly seek to envelop it.

Saints and prophets are the most direct witnesses of the nature and existence of God. The inscrutable ways in which and means through which God works can hardly be understood by the majority of men and women. Though God, like a magnet, attracts all unto Him and does not exhibit any partiality in favour of one as against another, man's vision of the inner Spirit is obscured by the veil of ignorance, impurity, and iniquity. When this impurity of heart is completely removed by earnest spiritual practice and unselfish good actions, the contemplation of God becomes easy and natural. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God'. Purity of mind is indispensable to the realization of God. Swami Brahmananda used to say: 'The mind is just like a milch cow which gives a larger supply when fed well. Give the mind more food and you will find it giving you better



service in return. And what constitutes the food of the mind? Meditation and concentration, prayer and worship, and all such practices'. To work for the Lord, to know Him as the one object of love, to love Him and give up all other attachments, and have no ill feeling towards any one—this is the best method to attain Him. By love, sincerity, and ceaseless practice one gradually becomes established in the state of constant spiritual communion with God. This is what the Hindu seers and sages mean when they emphasize that real religion is 'realization', 'being and becoming'.

'Give up, renounce, the desires of the world if you wish to realize God and become one with Him' says the world teacher in every land. But the man of the world clings to sense-pleasures and wants to worship a God who will freely grant him every form of desire and comfort. The worldly-minded prefer the pleasures of the senses to the bliss of divine communion. Instead of entering the world after realizing God and steadying and purifying the mind, they begin to seek God when it is too late, after spending the greater part of life in the midst of lust and greed. Blinded by passions and prejudices and ignoring the unmistakable and timely warnings uttered by the eminent altruists and moral educators of the world, the pseudo-reformers of a secular civilization are never tired of proclaiming from the house-tops their fatuous theories and quack norms in support of a soulless materialistic philosophy of life. A few make no secret of their contemptuous disregard for anything superconscious or spiritual. Yet they are far from being free and independent agents. Thinking and acting mostly under the duress of dogmatic and compulsive fiats, they drift aimlessly down the current of pleasure and pain in a humdrum manner.

Man's quest for God is as old as the origin of man himself. But does man really need God? Cannot the world go on without God? And even if He were actually present, can and does man feel the presence and understand the nature of God? A study of the evolution of the conception of the Divinity

reveals that ideas of religion, God, and the soul of man, though not without an underlying thread of unity, have been different at different periods of time. Even as God is One and unchangeable, man, too, in essence is a changeless entity. But man's ideas of God are constantly changing and expanding. Vedanta, which is never dogmatic, accepts all forms of worship, embracing every type of temperament and every facet of divine manifestation. Out of His infinite mercy God reveals Himself to the earnest devotee according to the devotee's capacity for comprehension and realization of the Higher Reality. The Lord alone bestows the fruit of worship in the form of compassionate blessing, deepening the devotee's faith and granting him the realization of the divinity already in him. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'Whatever may be the form a devotee seeks to worship with faith,—in that form alone I make his faith unwavering'. We have it on the authority of Sri Ramakrishna that as a devotee cannot live without God, so also God cannot live without His devotee. The Lord and the devotee seek each other and find supreme joy in mutual union as a lover and his beloved.

Many people appear to be sure of what God is not rather than what He is. Infinite and incomprehensible are the aspects of God and innumerable are the ways in which He sports. Yet there has always cropped up the difficult enigma why under the reign of a just and compassionate God acts of cruelty, injustice, and war are seen to have been permitted. If God is all-loving and impartial, why so much more misery than happiness and so much more wickedness than good? In trying to find an adequate answer to this apparently mysterious and unsatisfactory state of affairs, naturalists and humanists are led into depths that are more mysterious and unsatisfactory. Even those who do not believe in God are exercised by the contradictory nature of the problem of evil and imperfection in a universe created, preserved, and regulated by the almighty but all-merciful Lord whom scriptures and saints alike praise. He is



Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute (*sac-cid-ānanda*) ; He is the repository of countless good and auspicious attributes, the veritable manifestation of the most intense form of Love, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. A true lover of God is not unnerved by physical suffering or any other form of evil or injustice in the world, for he knows full well that this world is a Tantalus's hell where there is much to be endured and little to be enjoyed. God is above and beyond the petty joys and sorrows that the flesh is heir to.

The cry of anguish and protest at the understandable and seemingly inconsistent ways of Providence has found eloquent expression in the lives of some of the greatest devotees of the Lord. Suffering men, whose faith in a just God has somewhat been shaken, have, in spite of themselves, turned atheistic in utter desperation. This is more true of those who call upon God for obtaining worldly riches and benefits. To recall an interesting story in this connection:

There was a beggar who had travelled far and felt so tired that he could not walk any further. So he prayed, 'O Rama, give me a horse'. While he was thus praying for a horse whole-heartedly, a rich traveller happened to come along the road, on horseback, at the time leading several other horses including a young colt. As the traveller was on the look out for somebody to lift and carry the little colt which was finding it difficult to walk, he caught hold of the beggar and made him carry the colt. The beggar, once again calling upon the Lord, cried out, 'O Rama, you have misunderstood my prayer! Instead of a horse for carrying me I have been given a horse to carry'.

Similarly, people worship God with the object of securing such worldly things as power and position which in the end prove disastrous and lead them away from the path of God. He who prays to God for strength and devotion in order to pursue the practice of concentration and meditation on Him is the wisest of men.

Four types of virtuous men worship God as a rule, though in different ways: the man in distress (*ārta*), the man seeking knowledge (*jijñāsu*), the man seeking enjoyment (*arthārthi*), and the man endowed with wisdom

(*jñāni*). To the first type belong the vast majority of people who pray to God desiring to be saved from a hundred kinds of sorrow and suffering inevitable in life. But soon they forget God when their period of suffering ends, and remain deluded by the trumpery pleasures of the senses. When, once again, they are overwhelmed by sorrow and suffering they turn to God. This is regarded as the lowest form of prayer. The second type of persons, wishing to learn Self-knowledge or the Knowledge of God, pray to and worship God for the attainment of purity, truthfulness, and love. They do not feel worried over any sorrow or suffering they may be afflicted with. Sri Ramakrishna would often say, 'Let the body be bothered by the agony of illness, but may the mind ever remain filled with divine bliss!' The inquirer after knowledge strives to seek communion with the Lord through integration of personality and manifestation of the glorious higher qualities that so remarkably characterize the life of the Spirit. Prayer in this form becomes effective and brings peace of mind as well as the fruition of one's spiritual exercises.

Men who seek wealth, fame, and enjoyment—both here and hereafter—also pray to God with yearning for the fulfilment of their desires. There are cases where sincere devotees have had their prayers for worldly riches and enjoyments partly or wholly answered. The Lord, who is *kalpataru* (wish-fulfilling tree), bestows on man whatever he earnestly prays for, irrespective of its intrinsic value for his progress. Needless to say that this kind of approach to God is by no means commendable or spiritually beneficial.

It is said that once a fakir went to Emperor Akbar to ask for money. The Emperor was saying his prayers. He prayed, 'O Lord, give me money, give me wealth'. The fakir started to leave the place. But the Emperor motioned to him to wait. After finishing his prayers, Akbar came to the holy man and said, 'Why were you going away?' The fakir replied, 'You yourself were begging for money and wealth; so I thought that if I must beg I would beg of God and not of a beggar'.

He who renounces the desire for material



advantages and communes with God with single-minded devotion gets everything even without seeking for it. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Give up everything to Him, resign yourself to Him, and there will be no more trouble for you'. Jesus says: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you'. One has to believe that the Lord is always with him and keep the mind ever fixed on Him ; He will do all that is needful.

Of the four types mentioned above, the fourth type, viz. the man endowed with wisdom, is the best among the worshippers of the Lord. The *Gita* says,

'Of these the wise man, ever steadfast and devoted to the One alone, is the best. For supremely dear am I to the man of wisdom, and he is dear to Me. Noble indeed are they all. But the man endowed with wisdom I deem to be My very Self. For, steadfast in mind, he remains fixed in Me alone as the Supreme Goal. At the end of many births the man of wisdom seeks refuge in Me, realizing that Vāsudeva is all. Rare indeed is such a high-souled person'.

The Jnani's practice of the presence of God is through the method of deep concentration and meditation. He does not pray for this thing or that but merely for the pure love of God, out of the joy of communion with God. By not seeking the transitory values of life he gains ultimately everything that is worth possessing. His prayer is not motivated by any selfish desire and he does not seek anything from God. He prays for unalloyed love and pure devotion and does not care for any occult powers or miracles. Occult powers, though acquired after much practice, beget pride and drag a person into temptations, making him forget God. A man is less God-centred to the extent he is subject to the lure of miracles and mysteries. One cannot realize the goal if one has even the least trace of desire. God is not only the *ultimate* but also the most *intimate* essence of man's being.

A good, holy, and complete life without God is as chimerical as a full-size statue without the head. If the kingdom of God on

earth is the ideal destiny of mankind, the urge for the quest of that kingdom cannot but form the dominant note of any serious and successful philosophy of life. One could as well ask: Why should one at all endeavour to improve oneself and better one's conduct? What if man follows the dictates of his selfish instincts and ignores ethical norms so long as his own welfare and profits are assured? We could no more expect to live without breathing than we could expect to become perfect ethically and spiritually without cherishing an abiding faith in God. Call by whatever name one may, without the constant practice of the all-pervading presence of the Lord,—in whom man lives, moves, and has his being,—a good and pure life of disciplined thought and action is well-nigh impossible, perhaps beyond a certain limit or except under certain circumstances. Every virtue that is admired and appreciated by society is indissolubly linked with the inner Self of man which is non-different from the Supreme Reality. Without the basis of godliness such values as self-surrender, charity, and service lose much of their enduring significance. By disowning God and the spiritual legacy of man none can make an iota of effort in promoting peace, love, and brotherhood. Religious life is a perilous adventure and God forms the apex of the triangle—God-Man-Universe.

The presence of God is more tangible than one's own body and mind if only one can realize it. Each soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest the divinity through conquest of Nature, through communion with the Godhead. The ultimate goal is reached through four broadly divided courses of spiritual disciplines, viz. philosophical discrimination through the Knowledge of the Self (*Jñāna Yoga*); concrete rituals and ceremonies through devotion and self-surrender (*Bhakti-Yoga*); psychic control and concentration (*Rāja Yoga*); selfless action through service of man equivalent to worship of God (*Karma Yoga*). When the mind becomes one-pointed and rests in a receptive mood, the aspirant feels the grace of God and His presence.



The active and the persevering alone inherit the kingdom of God even on this earth and in this very life. He who sees in this world of manifoldness that One running through all, he who finds in this world of death that One Infinite Life, and he who finds in this world of insentience and ignorance that One Light and Knowledge—unto him belongs

eternal peace and happiness,—unto none else. For those who believe in God no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe in God no explanation is possible. It is not the fault of the pillar that the blind cannot see it. The aim of religion is self-perfection and in achieving this the practice of the presence of God is indispensable and vitally important.

## THE SECRET STAIRS TO SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

What do we mean by superconsciousness? It is a mystifying subject, but we shall become clearer in our conception as we proceed. By superconsciousness we mean a consciousness quite different from that of our waking state, dream state, or the state of deep sleep.

The experience of Sri Ramakrishna aptly demonstrates this. In later years he narrated this incident of his boyhood: 'One day in June or July, when I was six or seven years old, I was walking along a narrow path separating the paddy-fields, eating some of the puffed rice which I was carrying in a basket. Looking up at the sky I saw a beautiful sombre thunder-cloud. As it spread rapidly, enveloping the whole sky, a flight of snow-white cranes flew overhead in front of it. It presented such a beautiful contrast that my mind wandered to far off regions. Lost to outward sense, I fell down. Some people found me in that plight and carried me home in their arms'. This was the first time that the Master had lost consciousness in ecstasy, overpowered by an inexpressible emotion and unspeakable joy.

Later he realized the Divine Mother of the universe as a limitless, effulgent ocean of consciousness and in the depths of his being he was conscious of the presence of the Divine Mother and also saw Her manifest everywhere

—in all beings, in all things. This experience is the very summit of superconsciousness. All mystics—Hindu, Christian, Sufi, and others—speak of it. 'Sometimes', the Master used to say, 'I find that the universe is saturated with the consciousness of God, as the earth is soaked with water in the rainy season'.

The teachers of Vedanta recognize different stages of superconscious experience: 'When I identify myself with the body, I look upon Thee, O Lord, as my Master and myself as Thy servant. When I think of myself as the individualized soul, I regard Thee as the Infinite Whole and myself as a part. When I look upon myself as the Spirit transcending all my limitations, my individuality is lost in Thee, and I realize that I am merely Thyself'. These are the three storeys, as it were, of superconsciousness. St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest of the Christian mystics, declared that on the last rung of the mystical ladder, divine love enables the soul to be entirely assimilated in God. 'This is an experience which only a few exceptional souls can gain, but even those who have realized it cannot describe the state of absolute assimilation with the Divine Essence'.

Hindu sages have likened it to the experience of a dumb man, who can savour a sweet taste but is powerless to describe it.



To illustrate this highest state, which is beyond all thought and speech, Sri Ramakrishna speaks of a doll of salt. It moves towards the ocean in its desire to measure the ocean's depth, but the moment it touches the water, it loses all shape and form and becomes lost in it.

There are spiritual seekers, who, tired of their individuality, their separate personality, long to become lost in superconsciousness. But most of us want 'not to become sugar, but to *taste* sugar'. We want to taste the bliss of Divine Consciousness. We (spiritual aspirants), who are identified with our own ego, mind, senses, and body, wish to free ourselves from their bondage, to feel ourselves as parts or modes of the Oversoul, the Supreme Spirit, the Soul of our souls. How can we attain this union?

In a wonderful poem, St. John of the Cross gives some clues to the spiritual seeker, as to how this union is brought about. He describes in mystical language the soul's journey to God the Beloved:

'By night, secure from sight,  
And by a secret stair, disguisedly,  
By night and privily,  
Forth from my house where all things  
quiet be,  
Blest night of wandering in secret,  
When by none might I be spied,  
Nor see I anything,  
Without a light to guide  
Save that which in my heart burnt in  
my side . . .  
That light did lead me on,  
More surely than the shining of noontide,  
Where well I knew that One did for my  
coming bide;  
Where He abode might none but He  
abide'.

Plotinus, who is called the father of Christian mysticism, speaks of the soul's movement towards the Godhead as 'the flight of the alone to the alone'. The soul leaves its home, body, all alone, by a secret stair to the abode of the Beloved ever waiting to be in union with 'an eternal portion of Himself'. This, clearly, is a plane of existence beyond all ordinary human consciousness.

The goal of all spiritual striving is the attainment of the superconscious experience or Samādhi as the Hindus call it. The *Secret Stairs* are called the Chakras in Sushumnā. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we find the master mystic of our age giving us a picturesque description of what happened within himself. The Master describes the movement of the spiritual current or Kundalini along the Chakras or centres of consciousness. Speaking to his disciples he said: 'Some say that when I go into the superconscious state, my soul flies about like a bird in the Infinite Space. Once a Sādhu came here (Dakshineswar) and said to me, "In these Samadhis one feels the sensation of the spiritual current to be like the movement of an ant, a fish, a monkey, a bird, or a serpent"'. (Mystics use strange language). Sometimes the spiritual current rises through the spine, crawling like an ant. Sometimes, in Samadhi, the soul swims joyfully in the ocean of ecstasy, like a fish. Sometimes, when I lie down on my side, I feel the spiritual current pushing me like a monkey and playing with me joyfully. That current, like a monkey, suddenly with one jump reaches the Sahasrāra (the highest centre of consciousness). Sometimes, again, the spiritual current rises like a bird hopping from one branch to another (until the final flight). Sometimes the spiritual current moves up like a snake. Going in a zigzag way, at last it reaches the head and I go into Samadhi. A man's spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless his Kundalini is aroused'.

The Kundalini dwells in the Mulādhāra at the base of the spine. It passes along the Sushumna, the spiritual channel, until it finally induces Samadhi, the superconscious state. This state is never reached by merely reading books. One must pray to God, out of great restlessness and longing for liberation, for it is out of this restlessness for God that the Kundalini is first aroused. This restlessness, the real soul-hunger, this yearning—not artificially stimulated emotional outbursts—is to be intensified through systematic moral



purification, prayer, meditation and other spiritual exercises.

Describing his experience, Sri Ramakrishna says: 'Just before my attaining this state of mind (Samadhi), it had been revealed to me how the Kundalini is aroused, how the lotuses of the different centres blossom forth, and how all this culminates in Samadhi'.

These centres are like lotus flowers hanging downwards. As the spiritual current moves upward, each lotus stands erect and opens its petals. When the thousand-petalled lotus opens in the head, the goal is reached. 'Since then (after the blossoming of the thousand-petalled lotus)', said Sri Ramakrishna, 'I have been in this state'.

Meditation, without proper guidance, on the Muladhara, the basic centre where dwells the Kundalini, may stimulate animal desires and passions leading to disaster. For most of the people the safest course is to open up the higher centres by moving first along the side channels, called in Sanskrit 'Idā' and 'Pingalā'. These are connected with man's physical and psychic life, and, when the obstruction in the higher channel is partly removed, it is easier for the Kundalini to rise higher and higher.

The Yogis tell us that the bondage of the soul is due to its being controlled by the lower centres. Spiritual freedom is attained by making the higher centres active and enabling them to control the lower ones.

After the attainment of the highest state of superconsciousness, ordinary souls can no longer retain their physical body. But the greatest illumined souls, like the Divine Incarnations and their companions, can come down from their superconscious state, because they like to live in the company of devotees and enjoy the love of God. God retains in them the ego of knowledge and the ego of devotion, so that they may teach the world.

In their teachings one finds the description of the secret stairs to superconsciousness which is lying hidden in everyone. The power of introspection revealed to the sages

not only the microcosm but also the macrocosm. 'That which is not in the microcosm does not exist in the macrocosm'. During the days of his wanderings, after the passing away of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna), Swami Vivekananda had a remarkable experience which he wrote down in the note-book he always carried. 'The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan. Just as the individual soul is encased in the living body, so is the Universal Soul in the Living Prakriti (Nature)—the objective universe'. This is an ancient truth and it is well to keep it in mind while studying the teachings of the great ones.

The microcosm, the human personality, consists of three bodies: (1) the causal body, which, during the period of ignorance, limits consciousness and gives it the covering of the ego; (2) the mental or the emotion body; and (3) the gross body. Those who possess a subtle sense discover that our physical body is placed in a subtle body and that in turn is encased in the causal body. This is one complete microcosm which is a part of macrocosm.

The emotions play a tremendous part in physical life. The body can never be sufficiently healthy for spiritual practices unless the emotions, intellect, and will are harmonized as much as possible. Behind both the individual and the universal is the same Spirit, the one infinite Spirit manifesting itself both in the individual and the cosmic. Our little body is part of the infinite Cosmic Body; our little mind is part of the Divine Mind; our little ego is part of the Cosmic Ego. It is enough for us if we can experience the relation between the soul and the Oversoul. This is religion. Each of us dwells every moment in the eternal life but without knowing it. Through moral practice, prayer, and self-surrender, the spiritual seeker develops a new sense of introspection, a power which reveals to him the existence of the secret stairs. On rising above the limitations of the gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body, the aspirant experiences the macrocosm of the



Eternal God, and the soul finally comes in touch with the Oversoul.

The thoughts, emotions, and activities affect the sex organ, stomach, eyes, and the will-power. Schopenhauer says: When sex becomes the focus of the will, a new world opens up for youth. At other times the stomach becomes the focus of the will and at still other times the heart. There is an inseparable connection between the moods, bodily organs, and the centres of consciousness. Thoughts stimulate the nerve centres. Yogis tell us of the various Chakras, which, in the words of Arthur Avalon in his *Serpent Power*, are: 'subtle centres that vitalize and control the gross bodily tracts indicated by the various regions of the vertebral column, ganglia, plexus, nerves, arteries, and the organs situated in these respective regions'.

The lowest centre is at the base of the spinal column, close to the organ of evacuation. The next is located in the region corresponding to the sex-organ. The third is in the region of the navel, the fourth in the region of the heart, the fifth corresponds to the throat, and finally the sixth is between the eyebrows. Each of these centres, or Chakras, is a point of contact between the microcosm and the macrocosm. When a person dwells in a particular centre, he becomes conscious not only of himself but also of others. When the mind is immersed in worldliness, it dwells in the three lower planes, resulting in sensuality. The upper centres are connected with the spiritual life of man. When a man is spiritually awakened, his consciousness rises first to the heart. Then he sees a new spiritual light. 'In mute wonder he sees a radiance and cries out: What is this? What is this?' All mystics—Hindu, Christian, Sufi, and others—speak of this inner light.

The Yogis speak of the three Nādis or nerves in the spine. The central one is the channel for spiritual energy. This is known as Sushumna. The one to the left is Ida and that to the right Pingala. All the three have their junction at the base of the spine.

In the ordinary man the energy which

gathers at the confluence of the three channels flows only through the two side ones and is expressed as ordinary worldly thoughts, feelings, and activities. But in the Yogi, the current moves along the central channel. Ida and Pingala are like staircases while Sushumna is like an electric elevator. Kundalini is consciousness in its creative aspect as Power. It is the spiritual energy latent in man. In the worldly man it remains like a coiled serpent. The task in spiritual life is to make this spiritual energy flow through Sushumna—the central spiritual channel. With the upward movement of the serpent power, the spiritual seeker, or rather the soul, rises to higher and higher planes of consciousness.

But this spiritual channel, though latent in everyone, cannot be discovered without a certain degree of purity. Impurity is a great obstacle. The abuse of any of the bodily organs—sex, digestive, heart, brain, and others—creates obstruction and prevents the upward movement of the spiritual current. If all the energy flows along the side paths there is nothing left to carry us upwards. It is necessary to close the gateways of the lower channels with the help of well-regulated moral and spiritual life. Then the higher centres open up, enabling us to reach higher and higher planes of consciousness until there is a new vision, a new peace, and a new sense of existence.

I once visited a well-known Indologist in Germany who gave lectures on the Kundalini Yoga, and found his wife painting the Chakras from Arthur Avalon's *Serpent Power*. I asked, 'Don't you think it dangerous to play with this serpent?' He laughed and replied, 'Swami, none of these people who listen to the lectures takes them too seriously'. However, I know of some earnest but misguided souls ignorantly tampering with the serpent power and coming to grief.

Our teachers tell us: If you know how to use this serpent power properly, it will lead you to higher and higher planes of consciousness, but if you do not awaken it in the right way, it may vomit poison.



In the course of spiritual evolution all the contents of the sub-conscious may come forth. An aspirant must have great moral and spiritual strength to stand it. Partial awakening is dangerous.

A disciple once asked Swami Brahmananda: 'Sir, how can the Kundalini be aroused?' The Swami replied, 'According to some, there are special exercises, but I believe it can best be done through repetition of the Divine Name and meditation'. Especially suited to our present age is the practice of Japam or constant repetition of the Divine Name and meditation upon it. There is no spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the Mantra or the mystic word.

The body is like a stringed instrument. Each organ, each nerve centre, has a music of its own. When we become conscious of our heart, we find that there is a kind of music that belongs to the heart. Hindu Yogis give the analogy of the snake-charmer who holds the snake with music. By playing various tunes he can make it rise up on end. This has a mystic significance. By creating a spiritual music, the latent power of the Kundalini can be awakened. The finer the music and the more spiritual the musician, the higher will the subtle power rise, until it

reaches the highest and is united with the Supreme Spirit—the Soul of all souls.

There is a very apt analogy in the Upanishads. The body is likened to a tree, on which two birds are dwelling, one at the top and the other at the bottom. The lower bird, forgetful of its higher nature, is busy tasting the fruits of the tree to satisfy its hunger. The sweet fruits make it happy. The bitter and sour ones make it miserable. It hops upward, branch by branch, comes closer to the higher bird—the spectator unaffected by pleasure and pain—and becomes united with it. Similarly, the spiritual seeker feels himself separated until he rises upward and finds his soul united with the Oversoul.

On every spiritual path the first step is purification. Work and worship must become one, combined in a harmonious way of life. With the help of sincere devotion and meditation the soul becomes free from the bondage of the mind, and as it moves steadily from lower to higher planes of consciousness, the limitations dissolve and the soul at last meets the Beloved, the Oversoul, on the plane of superconsciousness. The soul attains its union with Sat-Chit-Ānanda or Eternal Existence-Consciousness-Bliss—the goal of all spiritual existence.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PANCHARATRAS

BY BALADEVA UPADHYAYA

The Pancharātra school of Vaishnavism has, for many long centuries, exerted a tremendous influence upon the religious, social, and cultural life of India. In fact its influence has been so pervading and enduring that there hardly exists an aspect of Indian life which does not present an indisputable illustration of its impact upon its development. Vaishnavism has shed its lustre and has showered its

benedictions upon the chequered history of Indian culture and civilization. A somewhat misguided enthusiasm on the part of Western scholars is responsible for giving the credit of the propagation of *ahimsā* (the doctrine of non-injury) to the founder of Buddhism, which, on genuine historical grounds, belongs to the promulgators of Vaishnavism in India. It is accepted on reliable authority that the Vaish-



nava faith is earlier in origin than the Buddhist religion founded by Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C. That Vaishnavism as a system of religious thought and as a school of philosophy has exerted an all-round influence upon the social institutions, the literary attainments, and the artistic achievements of Hindus in India as well as in Greater India, is a thesis which does not require much laboured thinking for its justification and for its establishment.

#### MEANING OF THE WORD 'PANCHARATRA'

The word 'Pancharatra', signifying the Vaishnava system, is a word of doubtful origin. The simple meaning of the word—'a system connected with five nights'—proves that a certain religious rite performed for five nights may have been responsible for the designation of the system. As regards the clear meaning of the term, authorities are at variance with one another. The Shānti Parva of the *Mahābhārata* emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the system by asserting that all the four Vedas as well as the Sāṅkhya—five in all—are contained therein. The *Īśvara Samhitā*, one of the most important Samhitas of the sect, tells us that the system was propounded by Nārāyaṇa in five nights to the five sages—Shāṇḍilya, Aupagāyana, Maunjāyana, Kaushika, and Bhāradvāja, who later on became the recognized expounders of the system (Adhyāya 21). The *Padma Samhitā* asserts the supremacy of its philosophic thought by specially mentioning the fact that the five well-known Shāstras became completely futile and wholly ineffective in its presence. The *Nārada Pañcarātra* (I. 44), one of the popular texts of the system, takes the word *rātra* to mean knowledge and proposes an interpretation of the word which is supported by the *Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā* (XI. 64), another equally authoritative book of the system. The Pancharatra system is so called because it discusses five topics of great spiritual import, viz. (1) the Highest Reality; (2) Final Emancipation; (3) Worldly Enjoyment (*bhukti*);

(4) mental concentration (*yoga*); (5) The world with its many-sided riddles (*visaya*). This difference of interpretation in assigning a uniform import to the term is highly significant and proves that it originated in an age of hoary antiquity whose traditions have become lost to the later generations.

A distant connection may be traced between the word Pancharatra and a Vedic sacrifice called Pancharatra Sattrā alluded to in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII. 6. 1).<sup>1</sup> This passage says that the Puruṣa, Narayana, conceived the idea of a Pancharatra Sattrā (continued sacrifice for five days) as a means of obtaining superiority over all beings and becoming all beings; and the preceding chapter (XII. 3. 4) narrates in detail how He, by sacrificing Himself, actually became the whole world—a Vedic idea popularized by the famous *Puruṣa Sūkta* (*Rg-Veda*, X. 90), where Narayana, in the form of Puruṣa, has been eulogized as the origin and source of the manifold beings of the universe as a result of sacrifice performed in the beginning of creation. Thus it may be presumed that the name of the system is a distant echo of the Vaishnava sacrifice—Pancharatra Sattrā—which was performed by Narayana who projected himself by means of His *Parā*, *Vyūha*, *Vibhava*, *Antaryāmin*, and *Arcā* forms. This conjecture would well agree with the statement of the *Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā* (XI, last verse) that the Lord Himself framed out of the original Shāstra the system (*tantra*) called Pancharatra describing His fivefold nature known as *Parā*, *Vyūha*, etc. and that the highest will of Vishnu is called *Sudarśana* through which He split into five, appearing five-mouthed.

#### PANCHARATRA AND VEDA

The relation between the Pancharatras and the Vedas calls for a clear enunciation. This Vaishnava system propounds a unique doctrine called the *catur-vyūha* doctrine (the principle of the fourfold Emanation). It is

<sup>1</sup> Vide Bhandarkar: *Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Minor Sects*, p. 31. Schrader: *Introduction to the Pancharatra*, pp. 25-26.



said that *Sankarṣaṇa*, representing the soul, has emanated from *Vāsudeva*, the Highest Being, and later on he becomes the source of the origination of *Pradyumna* (mind) who gives birth to *Aniruddha*, the principle of *ahamkāra*. The great monist Shankara<sup>2</sup> holds it to be clearly a non-Vedic doctrine which goes against the philosophical enunciations of the Upanishads. On the other hand, Ramanuja, in his *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, attempts to prove that Bādarāyana has not criticized the doctrine adversely, but has in fact supported it by cogent arguments. Even before Ramanuja the great Yāmunaāchārya, and after him Vedānta Deshika, one of the stalwarts of the Sri Vaishnava school, have contributed their mite by their highly authoritative books to prove the thoroughly infallible character of the Pancharatra thought and to show that they stand on a par with the Vedas in the elucidation of spiritual doctrines.

On the authority of the various Samhitas we can assert that the system under the name of Ekāyana forms a separate Shākhā of Veda and possesses, therefore, the same authoritativeness and infallibility as belong to the Vedas themselves. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 1. 2) knows of the Ekayana Vidyā which, according to the gloss of Ramanuja, means no other Shastra but the Pancharatra philosophy which teaches Narayana to be the *one means* (*eka ayana*), the sole saviour of the afflicted mortals from the triple afflictions of the mundane life. According to the testimony of Nāgesha, a recent writer on the Vedic Shakhas, the Ekayana Shakha is but another name for the Kānva Shakha of the White *Yajur-Veda*—a fact which would well agree with the statement of the *Jayākhya Samhitā* that the five earliest propounders of the system referred to above belonged to the Kanva Shakha of the *Yajur-Veda*.

Thus, in main, the system appears to be thoroughly Vedic in origin and in thought. It is idle to support, as has been done by vari-

ous Western scholars, that the system arose along with Jainism and Buddhism in opposition to the sacerdotal ritualism of the Vedic religion. In fact Vaishnavism is a staunch supporter of the Vedic sacrifices, the only improvement introduced being the shift of emphasis from *paśu-yāga* to *yava-yāga* which was performed solely with the offerings of barley and butter.

#### PANCHARATRA METAPHYSICS

The Highest Principle, variously termed as Vasudeva, Vishnu, or Narayana, is described in the Pancharatra Samhitas on the lines of the well-known Upanishadic passages. He is One without a second, without any beginning and without any end. Appearing as He does in the form of experience of immeasurable bliss, He dwells in every being, pervades the whole universe, unchangeable and devoid of any taint whatsoever. Hence He is generally compared with the great ocean, calm and unruffled, because it is not agitated by the slightest ripple. He is devoid of mundane attributes, but is endowed with supra-mundane attributes. He is an unlimited entity, knowing no limitations either in form, in time, or in space. His different names emphasize the different aspects of His nature. He is called Bhagavān, because of His being the repository of six well-known qualities; Vāsudeva, because of his indwelling ( $\sqrt{\text{vas}}$ , to dwell) in all the objects of the world; *Paramātmā*, because of his being the highest soul, higher than any soul existing in this universe. Thus the Pancharatra conception of the Highest Being is in strict accordance with the Upanishadic description of Brahman. What the *Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā* (II. 53) expounds is simply a paraphrase of the celebrated passages from the Upanishads.

The Highest Principle is conceived of as possessing the double aspects of *saguna* and *nirguna*. He is attributeless as well as endowed with attributes. In the sense that He has no connection whatsoever with the material qualities of various types, He is spoken of as entirely devoid of all attributes (*nirguna*). At the same time, for the creation and preser-

<sup>2</sup> Vide his Bhāṣya on the *Brahma-Sūtras*, II. 2. 42-45.



vation of the world order, He possesses six well-known qualities and is thus *saguṇa* as well. These qualities, known under the general name of *bhaga*, are six in number: (1) Knowledge (*jñāna*), (2) Power (*śakti*), (3) Majesty (*aīśvarya*), (4) Strength (*bala*), (5) Virility (*vīrya*), (6) Splendour (*tejas*). Out of these the first is taken to be the main attribute, while the remaining five serve as auxiliaries to it and are thus derivative in nature.

### THE SIX QUALITIES

Knowledge performs a dual function inasmuch as it is His form as well as His attribute. Shakti signifies that the highest Vishnu, besides being the creator of the universe, is, at the same time, the material cause of the universe. Majesty stands for the independent creation of the world, i.e. the Lord is the sole creator of the world, because He possesses complete independence and depends not on any outer help for His work. Strength means the omnipotence of the Lord in the sense that He experiences no fatigue in the arduous tasks He performs. Virility signifies the fact that in spite of His being the material cause He undergoes no change and remains completely unaffected by the countless transformations thus produced. Splendour speaks of the complete independence of the Lord who evolves the universe out of Himself and does not depend upon any material for the fashioning of the world. Vishnu serves both as the material and the instrumental cause of creation at the same time. He is independent and omnipotent, as He has not to look for help from any source whatsoever. The term *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam* (cause of all causes), applied in the Samhitas in connection with Bhagavan, serves to prove His independence and all-powerfulness. Causeless as He is, He is the cause of all the causes—the Prime Spirit that moves the universe, guides it, and is the last resort in the final annihilation of the world.

Lakshmi is a common appellation for the power of the Lord. Bhagavan is endowed with Shakti and that Shakti is commonly

called Lakshmi. The relation between them is a matter of hot discussion among the Samhitas of the system. The mutual relation between Narayana and Lakshmi appears to be *apparently Advaitic* in nature, but there is in fact no identity between them. Even in the state of final dissolution, when the whole world becomes submerged in the Lord, complete unity or unification is not effected between Vishnu and Lakshmi. The divine couple enjoy what may be called 'complete embrace' in this condition, but still it is not complete unification since the two emerge as separate beings as soon as the time for creation comes. The *Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā* (III. 25) speaks in unmistakable terms that Lakshmi as a principle is altogether different from the Lord. In their final embrace they appear to be locked up in unity, though in reality they are not, but are only *apparently one*, since they maintain their separateness even in that condition (IV. 78). The above statement purports to tell us that both Lakshmi and Narayana, united in one embrace, appear *as if* they represent one principle. The word *iva* ('as if') is a clear indication of the fact that in the last analysis both the principles retain their individuality and separateness and it is only an *apparent unity* which they signify.

### SRI AND NARAYANA

The dual form of the Deity constitutes the Highest Brahman, the Father-Mother principle of the universe. It may be said that the mutual relation of Sri and Narayana is one of *avinābhāva* like that of substance and attribute, light and luminosity, or sun and shine. Though they are regarded as distinct, there is no difference in their functions or tastes. It, however appears that the dualism is kept up for cosmic functions and liberation of selves.

### POWERS OF THE LORD

The power of Narayana, which is none other than this very self, becomes revealed in the beginning of creation through some unknowable and unimaginable cause. Creation is the immediate result of this revelation of



the Lord's Shakti,—which is variously termed as Lakshmi, Padmā, Sri, Ānandi, and Svatantrā. At the time of creation Lakshmi appears under two forms: Kriyā Shakti and Bhuti Shakti. Kriyā Shakti signifies the divine will of creating the universe, while Bhuti Shakti stands for the transformation or emanation of the universe out of the celestial Narayana, the word Bhuti ( $\sqrt{bhū}$ , to be or to become) meaning the *becoming* or the formation of something into the other. For the creation and preservation of the world order, the dual Shakti is imperative, because its absence is thoroughly responsible in making the Lord suspend His cosmic functions.

The first manifestation of the Lord's Power is called 'pure creation' as distinguished from the 'impure creation' which is a result of the admixture of the triple Gunas of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. The central idea of 'pure creation' is the fact that the Divinity, for the sake of commonweal and the amelioration of afflicted humanity, manifests in a fourfold form (Vyuhās or emanations) already described. Out of the four Vyuhās, the highest is Vāsudeva, an etherial embodiment of all the six attributes. *Śaṅkarṣaṇa* represents within himself *Jñāna bala*; *Pradyumna* represents majesty and virility, while *Aniruddha* stands for power and splendour. The Vyuhās possess a psychological importance inasmuch as *Śaṅkarṣaṇa* is ruling over the individual soul, *Pradyumna* over *Manas*, and *Aniruddha* over *ahamkāra* (the principle of individuality).

Apart from the fourfold Vyuhās, there are three other manifestations of 'pure creation': (1) Vibhava, (2) Antaryamin, (3) Archāvatāra. Vibhava means an Avatara, pure and simple—descent of Ishvara among beings by means of forms similar to that genus, like the famous ten Avataras. The Antaryamin form of the Lord, modelled after the famous Upanishadic teachings,<sup>3</sup> shows Him to be abiding in the heart-lotus of every individual, engaged in guiding him from within. Archavatara means images of the Lord consecrated according to the

rules of the Pancharatra rites. The Lord 'descends' into the image with a non-material body.

As regards the order of 'impure creation', the Pancharatra works widely differ, but, in general, creation starts with *Pradyumna* and ends with the five elements—somewhat similar to the Sankhya system though differing in some details here and there.

### THE SOUL

The soul is a part of Lakshmi or a 'contraction' of Lakshmi, as the Goddess Herself calls it in the *Lakṣmī Tantra* (VI.36).

In Liberation and then in the Great Dissolution, the Jiva is not finally dissolved in the Lord; in the former case, he 'becomes one' (*ekī bhavati*) with the Lord, he joins the Lord in Vaikuntha; in the latter case, he becomes *latent* in Him when Vaikuntha, with everything else, is temporarily withdrawn. Thus apparently the Vaishnava Samhitas use Advaitic phraseology in describing the relation between the Jiva and the Paramatma; but they are *not Advaitic* in the absolute sense. They only mean the merging or the fusion of the two principles where each retains its own individuality and separateness.

Both bondage and liberation of the soul depend upon the special powers of the Lord. The Divine Will (technically termed *Sudarśana*) is supreme. Under the guidance of the Lord it works and achieves results designed by the Lord. It is countless in number, but still it manifests in five different ways. They are the Shaktis called Creation, Preservation, and Destruction—of the universe, Obstruction (Nigraha) and Favouring (Anugraha)—of the soul. The last two Shaktis are specially conceived of for explaining the bondage and liberation of the soul, which, sharing as it does in all the divine powers of the Lord, is otherwise not free from the shackles of mundane life. He is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. This anomaly calls for an explanation which this Tantra amply offers. Through His Nigraha Shakti the Lord obscures the all-round powers of the Jiva, which henceforth becomes 'atomic'

<sup>3</sup> Vide the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.7.



(*anu*) in form and therefore is able to achieve only a few things and to know only a few objects. This is the bondage of the soul which is the direct product of the threefold *mala* or taint. The Pancharatra asserts that the soul in itself is unable to achieve the Highest Bliss, and it is only when the Lord, out of His deep compassion for the destiny of the soul, raises it up from the mire of worldly life and gives it refuge under His protection that it becomes finally released and enjoys the pure bliss of 'oneness' with the Lord. It is the play of His divine grace which is technically called the 'Descent of Divine Grace' (*śakti-pāta*) in the Tantras.

#### RELEASE AND ITS MEANS

The highest purpose of the system is the achievement of eternal bliss, by the soul, from the loosening of the bondage in which it is temporarily entangled. And for this aim the Vaishnava system gives in detail rites and rituals connected with the worship of Vishnu. Detailed rules for the construction of temples, for the preparation of images of the various Avatars of Vishnu, for the installation of such images, and their daily worship along with the seasonal festivals, form the main part of the Pancharatra Samhitas. The major portion of these works essays to describe, in due detail, many such rituals and rules. For final release, devotion is considered to be the most effective means, meant for all without any difference of caste or creed. So the Vaishnava Dharma is a universal religion whose portals are open to all and from entering which not a single earnest seeker after Truth is ever debarred.

Devotion is of several types and the best type recognized by the Acharyas is called 'self-surrender' or 'taking refuge in the Lord' (*śaraṇāgati*). This self-surrender is of unique importance due to the fact that it seeks to compel the Lord to bestow His compassion upon afflicted and suffering humanity. Refuge in the Lord (*śaraṇāgati*), technically termed *nyāsa* in the Pancharatra books, has been minutely and psychologically analysed by theorists and has been shown to be of six types:

(1) Firm determination on the part of the devotee to remain agreeable to the Lord under all circumstances.

(2) Firm will to shun everything smacking of disagreeableness to the Lord, whatever the result might be.

(3) Firm faith in the saving power of the Lord that He will undoubtedly and without fail protect His devotees.

(4) To select the Lord alone as his saviour and guide.

(5) To surrender one's self whole-heartedly unto the lotus-feet of the Lord.

(6) Extreme humility of the devotees in the presence of the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

The Vaishnava devotee is called *pañca-kālajña* (one who knows the 'five' times), i.e. he is devoted to the worship of the Lord in five different modes:

(1) To be eager towards the Lord in mind, in speech, and in words (*abhigamana*).

(2) To collect different materials—flowers and other things—to be utilized in the service of the Lord (*upādāna*).

(3) Actual worship (*ijyā*).

(4) Hearing and meditating upon the meaning of the religious texts on devotion (*svādhyāya*).

(5) Concentration of the mind upon the lotus-feet of Narayana, after undergoing the eightfold Yogic path (*yoga*).<sup>5</sup>

Thus an earnest devotee should engage himself in external worship of the Supreme Being in His 'personal' aspect and in meditation upon His form through the recital of His names and other efficacious means.

By means of the method advocated, a devotee attains the highest Brahmā—that form of the Supreme which is most dear to his heart—the most lovable form of his *iṣṭa-devatā*. The *Jayākhya Samhitā* describes this union of the individual self with the Supreme Self on the lines of the Upanishads. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, as the rivers flow towards the ocean and merge themselves into it, leaving

<sup>4</sup> *Ahīrbudhnya Samhitā*, XXXVII.28.

<sup>5</sup> *Jayākhya Samhitā*, XX. 65-75.



their names, forms, and identities, so the realized souls attain the Supreme Purusha, being freed from their forms, names, and separate individualities.<sup>6</sup> The Samhitas assert the same theory, but in the final analysis the Jivas have their distinctness even after absorption in the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

This is a brief analysis of the most important

<sup>6</sup> *Mundaka Upaniṣad*, III.2.8.

<sup>7</sup> *Jayākhya Samhitā*, IV.123.

Vaishnava tradition wellknown in the religious history of India. The *Bhagavad Gita* is claimed to be the most important text of the system, whose earliest treatment is to be found in the Shanti Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. Among the existing forms of Vaishnavism, Sri-Vaishnavism (popularized by Ramanuja) draws most of its materials from the cosmology, theology, and philosophy of the Pancharatra system.

## PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

(Continued from the June issue)

It has been stated before that the discipline of action and the discipline of contemplation are meant for two different types of people. 'Even of yore, O Arjuna, a twofold devotion was taught by Me to the world: devotion to knowledge for the contemplative, and devotion to work for the active' (III.31). As long as a man remains conscious of his social obligations, he must work. But there are some who regard worldly values as insignificant and transitory. They seek knowledge through contemplation and hanker after the peace that comes through actionlessness. But Sri Krishna says: 'Not by merely abstaining from action does a man reach the state of actionlessness, nor by mere renunciation does he arrive at perfection' (III.4). 'He who restrains his organs of action but continues to dwell in his mind on the objects of the senses, deludes himself and is called a hypocrite' (III.6). True renunciation of action is not possible without at first practising the discipline of action. Purified by action, one quickly realizes Brahman (V.6). In Sri Krishna's final and conclusive judgment, people with active minds should follow Karma Yoga, that is, perform action without attachment or desire for fruit (XVIII.6).

There are three kinds of renunciation that an active man may pursue. He can renounce an obligatory action through delusion. But this is positively harmful, for it darkens his inner spirit (XVIII.7). He may renounce a duty for fear of inflicting physical suffering upon himself or others. But by such renunciation he does not attain the peace he desires (XVIII.8). But when a man performs an obligatory action solely because it is to be done, and renounces all attachment and the fruit, he obtains the fruit of renunciation, namely, inner peace (XVIII.9). He never hates a duty because it is disagreeable, nor feels attached to a duty because it is agreeable (XVIII.10).

The *Bhagavad Gita* prescribes the way to transform the urge for action into a discipline for contemplation. It is, as we have seen, to perform action and at the same time preserve the spirit of renunciation, thus combining both action and renunciation. It urges men to work strenuously but not to be impelled by selfish motives. In other words, the advice of the *Gita* to the worldly-minded is not the renunciation of action but renunciation *in* action. The common business of life should not be abhorred, but selfish desires must be



suppressed. 'He who neither hates nor desires may be known as constantly practising renunciation' (V.3).

An action by itself, even a so-called violent action, is not necessarily evil. A judge who sends a criminal to the gallows, or a surgeon who performs an operation on a patient, or a general who leads an army in a righteous war, may not be engaging in a sinful action. What is sin? By what impelled does a man commit sin? Sri Krishna says: 'It is desire, it is wrath, which springs from *rajas*. Desire is our enemy on earth, all-devouring and the cause of all sin' (III.37). Why is this so? Because desire, in the form of ignorance, conceals the true Self of man, 'like smoke hiding fire, or dust hiding a mirror, or the womb hiding an unborn baby' (III.38). Desire finds its support in the senses, the mind, and the intellect and thus veils knowledge. The aspirant should start with the control of the senses. 'Even one of the roving senses, if the mind yields to it, carries away discrimination, as a gale carries away a ship on the waters' (II.67). When the senses are controlled, the mind and the intellect are gradually controlled.

All the factors necessary for an action should be spiritualized. Otherwise the desired fruit of self-purification is not attained. Knowledge, which is the basis of all action, should be characterized by all-embracing oneness. By means of such knowledge one sees unity in diversity (XVIII.21). The knowledge that emphasizes diversity or is confined to one single effect as if it were the whole, and which is trivial, is condemned (XVIII.21-22). The doer himself should be free from attachment and egoism, endowed with fortitude and zeal, and unruffled by success and failure (XVIII.26). The doer, who is passionately attached to action and desirous of its fruit, who is greedy and violent and is moved by sorrow and joy, or the doer who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, indolent, desponding, and procrastinating, is not a real Karma Yogi, though he may be busy with many activities (XVIII.27-28).

The true understanding necessary for action is that which can discriminate between right and wrong, work and rest, and bondage and liberation (XVIII.30). Perverse understanding gives a distorted apprehension of right and wrong, of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, and reverses all values (XVIII.32). Right firmness in action is accompanied by unswerving concentration and the control of the mind and the senses. Misdirected firmness holds fast, with intense attachment, to duty, pleasure, and wealth; or to grief, fear, sleep, despondency, and sensuality (XVIII.34-35). Happiness is accepted as the aim of action. Right happiness is born of the clear knowledge of the Self and is acquired by steady practice; it appears like 'poison' at first but like 'nectar' in the end (XVIII.36-37). The happiness that is generally sought by worldly people arises from the contact of the senses with their objects and is like nectar at first but like poison in the end (XVIII.38). But the happiness enjoyed by deluded persons arises principally from sleep, sloth, and error (XVIII.39). And lastly, action itself, in order to be right, should have a bearing on social welfare and be performed without love or hate and without longing for the fruit. The action that requires much effort and is performed to gratify desires, or is prompted by egoism, entangles the doer in the world. Degrading action is undertaken through ignorance, without regard to consequences or loss or injury, or without regard to one's ability (XVIII.25).

Action does not conflict with the spiritual aspiration of a man, be he a dualistic worshipper of the Personal God or a non-dualistic seeker of Self-knowledge. The special message of the *Gita* is that action performed in the right spirit can bring about both God-realization and Self-realization.

The dualists seek God through love. They see God alone as the real doer, and man as an instrument in His hands. They work for the satisfaction of the Lord. Unless done in that spirit, action binds a man to the world (III.9). This sort of action undoubtedly im-



plies a motive; but the desire for God-realization is not an evil. It is, on the contrary, extolled. Blessed is the person whom God chooses to be His instrument. Success or failure is beside the point. A devotee is like a sword in God's hand. There is a joy in being made, a joy in being used, and a joy in being broken and finally thrown away after the mission is fulfilled.

The purpose of the world need not be fulfilled through violence and destruction. Nature need not be 'red in tooth and claw'. It is man's total action that determines the cosmic process. As long as human nature remains a mixture of good and evil, the world also will be a mixture of good and evil, and God will use His instruments for both constructive and destructive purposes, to sustain His creation. It was Arjuna's destiny, created by his own past action, to be born in a military caste and be trained for war. Therefore he was exhorted to fight. 'Surrendering all actions to Me, with mind intent on the Self, freeing yourself from longing and selfishness, fight,—unperturbed by grief' (III.30). Even through this violent action Arjuna would ultimately attain God-realization. 'Therefore, at all times constantly remember Me and fight. With your mind absorbed in Me you will surely come to me' (VIII.7). It is reported that Socrates experienced divine ecstasy while marching with the army to the battle-field.

As a result of selfless action the devotee's heart is purified. It becomes free of ego, lust, and greed. The man of pure mind cultivates love for God. 'He treats alike all beings and attains supreme devotion to Me' (XVIII.54). The result of his devotion is complete absorption in God. 'By that devotion he knows Me, knows what in truth I am, and who I am. Then, having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me' (XVIII.55). 'Even though engaged in all kinds of action, a man who has taken refuge in Me reaches, by My grace, the eternal and imperishable abode' (XVIII.56). He never falls from divine grace. 'He who sees Me everywhere

and sees everything in Me—to him I am never lost nor is he ever lost to me' (VI.30). Krishna gave Arjuna His plighted word that a devotee of God never comes to grief.

Action leads to Self-realization. Those who seek the knowledge of the Self follow, while performing action, the discipline of discrimination—the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. The non-Self, consisting of body, senses, mind, intellect, and ego, is the effect of *ajñāna*, or ignorance, which as already stated, is compounded of the three Gunas. Action inheres in the non-Self. The Self, which is by nature pure, free, and blissful, is desireless and therefore actionless. It is the very stuff of peace. The notions of agency, action, and enjoyment of results do not belong to the Self. Nature, or Prakriti, creates all such ideas (V.14). 'All work is done by the Gunas of Prakriti; but he whose mind is deluded by egotism thinks: "I am the doer".' (III.27). The sensations of pleasure and pain, through contact with agreeable or disagreeable objects, are natural for the senses. But the wise do not allow their Self to come under the sway of these sensations. Outer objects, the body, the senses, and the ego are the modifications of nature, that is to say, of the Gunas. It is the Gunas that, in the form of the ego, experience the Gunas in the form of objects. Therefore action is really the preoccupation of the Gunas with the Gunas (III.28). The Self, by its proximity, animates the insentient Gunas and looks on unconcerned without in any way participating in the action or experiencing the result. '“I do nothing at all”, thinks the Yogi, the knower of Brahman; for in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting; in walking, breathing, and sleeping; in speaking, emitting, and seizing; in opening and closing the eyes, he is assured that it is only the senses busied with their objects' (V.8-9). Working without attachment, he remains 'untainted by sin, as a lotus leaf by water' (V.10). He thus dwells happily in the body, 'the city of nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done' (V.13). He sees non-action in



action. Even when the body and mind are intensely active, he sees the Self to be actionless; he enjoys peace.

The result of such disciplined action is purity of mind. The seeker endowed with a pure mind devotes himself to hearing about the Self, reasoning about the Self, and lastly contemplating the Self with total devotion. In the depths of contemplation he realizes the identity of the Self and Brahman. He experiences the oneness of existence. 'With the heart concentrated by yoga, viewing all things with equal regard, he beholds himself in all beings and all beings in himself' (VI.29).

From what has been stated above it will be seen that disciplined action is effective for the active person, whether he seeks the knowledge of God or of the Self. The result in either case is the purification of the mind, followed by the love of God or knowledge of the Self. In the final stage all actions drop away and the seekers are completely absorbed in their respective ideals. In God-realization, the distinction between God and the individual self is retained, though the ordinary notion of the ego is transcended. In Self-realization, complete unity is experienced.

What, in the light of the *Gita's* teachings, is right work and what is wrong work? 'One has to understand what action really is, and likewise what forbidden action is, as also what non-action is. Hard to understand is the way of action' (IV.17). The real non-action belongs to the Self or Brahman. The individualized soul is always active. The non-action of the indolent is the reverse of the actionlessness of the illumined person. It appears that the *Bhagavad Gita* does not attempt to determine what is right or wrong in a given situation. That is left to the good sense and judgment of the individual who should be guided by the comprehensive Vedantic ideal of the oneness of existence or of the reality of the Godhead. Unity is the basic principle. Good is whatever promotes that unity; evil is what retards it and creates separation. In the dualistic context, good is

whatever brings one nearer to God, and evil is what takes one away from Him.

According to the *Gita*, a man's duty or right action is determined by his position in the Hindu caste system. The division of society into four groups or castes is ordained by Divine law. It is a natural division of human society. Each caste has its duties and obligations. The Brahmin, endowed with self-control, austerity, and Tiprightness, performs the duty of a teacher and a priest. The Kshatriya, endowed from birth with heroism, firmness, high spirit, sovereignty, and generosity, performs the duty of a king or a warrior. To look after the economic prosperity of society is the duty of the Vaishya, who is engaged in agriculture, trade, and cattle-rearing. The Shudra renders manual service. It is the duty of the other castes to protect him. The basis of the division is work and inborn qualities, which are again determined by a man's nature or Prakriti. A Brahmin's action is influenced by *sattva*, belonging to his own Prakriti; a military man possesses an excess of *rajas*. In the character of the merchant, *rajas* predominates over *tamas*; and in that of the Shudra, *tamas* prevails over *rajas*. So, according to the *Gita*, a man is born in a particular caste as the result of the quality of his nature, formed by his own action in the previous birth. All men are not born equal. The law of Karma explains this inequality. Neither God nor an unaccountable destiny is responsible for it. If a man fulfils his duty, determined by his present position, he will, by the same law of Karma, be born with qualities fitting him for a higher position. Thus in Hindu law and polity, fundamental duties take precedence over fundamental rights. Right is derived from service and fulfilment of obligations.

Like all earthly organizations, the caste system also, in course of time, lost its original meaning. It became stratified. The power of the Brahmins increased, and the privileges of the lower castes were gradually curtailed. But it can be truly said that the Hindus, through the caste system, tried to build up a



social structure on the basis of mutual goodwill and co-operation, and to remove the dangers of the competitive view of society and actually maintained for many centuries a wonderful social solidarity. The caste system in its vigorous days recognized the supremacy of wisdom over military power, wealth, and organized labour.

The duty determined by a man's caste is called Dharma. It is shaped by his own inner nature. Through obedience to Dharma, a man grows in spiritual stature. 'Man attains to high perfection by devotion to his own Dharma' (XVIII.45). One ought not to give up the duty to which one is born, though it has its imperfections; for all undertakings are beset with imperfections, as fire with smoke (XVIII.48). 'Better is one's own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well performed. He who does the duty ordained by his nature incurs no sin' (XVIII.47). To go against Dharma is to go against nature, and the result is disastrous. This duty is to be performed in the spirit of Karma Yoga, that is to say, by remaining unruffled by success or failure, relinquishing the fruit to God, and preserving inner serenity. 'By worshipping Him from whom all beings proceed and by whom the whole universe is pervaded—by worshipping Him by the performance of duty does a man attain perfection' (XVIII.46). Work, in this sense, is worship. Service to man is service to God.

Often the question is asked how Karma, or action, can be reconciled with freedom. Karma implies necessity; the cause must be followed by the effect, which in its turn becomes a new cause. The inexorable wheel of causality goes on. Man appears to be a mere cog in this wheel. He must work, in spite of himself, driven, as it were, by force (III.36). Where, then, is freedom? The *Bhagavad Gita* offers the answer in the following manner:

Every Karma done voluntarily produces a twofold result. One is immediate, in the form of pleasure and pain. This is unavoidable and should be accepted without demur. The

other is in the form of the subtle impression (*samskāra*), which expresses itself in concrete action in future. This tendency of the impression towards fruition can be controlled. One can check it by the exercise of will-power before it becomes a concrete action. The Vedānta philosophy in this connection gives the illustration of the hunter who shot an arrow at what he considered to be a deer. As he fixed the second arrow to finish off the victim, he suddenly discovered, to his great regret, that the object was not a deer but a sacred cow. Though he could not recall the first arrow, which had already left his hand, he was free to stop the second one.

Further, according to the *Gita*, a man is not a mere psycho-physical entity, in which case he would have no freedom. It is true that in the physical world, including the mental, he is bound by the causal law. But man has a higher Self, which is free. His lower self, which is the reflection of the higher, engages in actions, clamours for their results, and becomes bound by them. The ignorant person identifies himself with the lower self. Disciplined action, as described above, removes the veil of ignorance and reveals the higher Self, which is free from the limitations of time, space, and causality. Even while preoccupied with action through the mind and the senses, the illumined person experiences the freedom of the higher Self. To him action is really non-action.

One of the special messages of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that action is not inconsistent with perfection. The trend of the Upanishadic thought has been explained in different ways. According to a Hindu tradition, the body does not generally survive the all-annihilating experience of oneness or God-communion. According to the *Gita*, it appears that a man endowed with the knowledge of the Self or God can work for human welfare. It gives the illustrations of King Janaka and Sri Krishna. Krishna says to Arjuna: 'I have no duty; there is nothing in the three worlds that I have not gained, and nothing that I have to gain. Yet I continue



to work' (III. 22). An illumined person must not set the bad example of non-activity. 'For should I not ever engage, unwearied, in action, O Arjuna, men would in every way follow in my wake' (III. 23). Universal inactivity results in disaster. 'If I should cease to work, these worlds would perish; I should cause the mixture of castes and destroy all these creatures' (III. 24). The manner in which a perfect man works in the world with serenity and detachment is described in the second (55-72) and the fourteenth (27-28) chapters.

How did Arjuna react to Krishna's teachings? After the instruction was over, Krishna said to Arjuna: 'Has it been heard by you, O Pārtha, with an undivided mind? Has your delusion, born of ignorance, been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?' (XVIII. 72). The teachings did not fall on deaf ears. 'My delusion is gone,' replied Arjuna, 'I have regained my memory through your grace, O Krishna. I am firm; I am free from doubt. I will act according to your word' (XVIII. 73). He plunged into the battle and witnessed the death of even his own son, his cousins, nephews, teachers, elders, and friends. As a human being he undoubtedly was stricken with grief; but thanks to Krishna's teachings he did not allow this grief to overwhelm him or cloud his understanding. He won the battle,

destroying the power of evil and restoring moral order.

Arjuna's problem is the perennial problem of man. What is his duty when faced by the power of evil? Should he accept its challenge even at the sacrifice of his peaceful life? What if the evil is armed with physical power? Should he meet violence with violence? Sri Krishna's advice in the *Bhagavad Gita* seems to be that a man conscious of his obligations to society must perform his duty according to his Dharma and uphold justice. But he must first be convinced that he is on the side of righteousness. Also he must make every effort to win over the evil by peaceful means. But if that fails, he will have to fight evil with every weapon in his power. But his motive must be crystal clear. There should be no trace of malice and hatred, passion and selfishness, behind his actions. He should fight, regarding himself as God's instrument. When the social order is preserved, men get the opportunity to develop their highest spiritual potentialities. We are assured by the concluding verse of the *Bhagavad Gita* that when the power of the Spirit and the power of arms work in harmony, there is bound to follow victory, good fortune, prosperity, and all-round welfare.

(Concluded)

## VEDANTA PHENOMENOLOGY

BY PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

### I. AWARENESS AS THE METAPHYSICAL GROUND

Awareness is the ultimate principle of everything. For there can be nothing mentionable of which we are not aware. Any material principle such as space-time, wave-motion, or energy, cannot be as foundational or ultimate as awareness, for we are aware of matter as

constituting the world and we would have questions regarding the origin of matter of which we are aware as an object standing over against the subject that becomes aware of it. The objective pole of awareness, being passive and a part of awareness, cannot cover or explain awareness which is a spiritual activity and a whole including the subjective pole



besides the objective one. That is, this awareness must be held as more fundamental than any of its poles which can easily be derived from it. Any mental principle cannot be the ultimate metaphysical principle if it is such an obvious activity as thinking, willing, feeling, or sensing. For, then it becomes an object of awareness which is more fundamental. If it is a hypothetical entity such as a universal mental substance or mind, then, besides being uncertain like any hypothesis, it may be regarded either as a subject (like one's own mind) or as an object (like others' minds). In each case it would require, for its positing, awareness with the other pole. The universal subject cannot exist without being aware of a universal object and *vice versa*. Subject and object each presupposes the other and awareness of which they are poles. Moreover, in conceiving some universal objective mind (like the mind of God, conceived as the other) as the foundational principle, there is the further difficulty caused by the impossibility of deriving from it our mind which we experience as a subject and which is a part of reality. For, our mental activities are never felt as impelled by some other mind or Overmind, they appear as free and not externally controlled and they appear as subjective (as peculiarly ours), while the other mind is objective. We do become aware of an Overmind controlling our minds, but then we do not regard this Overmind as the other, rather we identify ourselves with this Overmind and regard it as our own; we, so to say, *become* it, and regard our individual self as an illusory object. So that, in a sense, the objective or the other mind may be derived from subjectivity, as it can be projected as an object by the higher subject (as is illustrated by such phenomena also as dream, illusion, and imagination), but subjectivity cannot be so derived from objectivity. Subjectivity is thus more fundamental than objectivity. And, as has been noted before, awareness is more fundamental than both of these which are its two poles presupposing it. Nothing can be asserted of which we are not directly aware and as this awareness is more primitive than

its object, it is the ultimate reality. Metaphysics, therefore, must be based on my personal experience and must not be speculative or hypothetical like science. It is the exposition of the self-evident by the self-evident, that is, explication and clarification of what is already there in personal awareness. The task of metaphysics, as phenomenology of Husserl and his followers now recognize, and what Vedanta and Yoga affirmed in the past, is not to 'tell stories' but to search for, discover, and state nothing that is not given in our experience in the very form in which they are stated. The ultimate reality is not to be a postulated or inferred something behind the world and beyond all experience, to be but dimly suspected and excitedly talked about, but it must be something given in experience and obtained by analysing performances and functions of consciousness. Of course, here consciousness is not restricted to its *ordinarily* explicit and obvious acts; it includes what are implicit in the obvious acts and what are *made* explicit through self-introspection or pursuing our ordinary experiences back to their origin. Philosophy is thus direct intuition involving discovery of the deeper layers of experience behind the superficial ones. It is a meditative research and revelation, and so far as the absolute realizes itself through 'my' meditations, philosophy cannot eliminate subjectivity. 'In you lies the endless sea, only you have not seen it', sings a Bengali *bāul*. 'Here likewise, in this body of yours, my son, you do not perceive the True; but there in fact it is. In that which is the subtle essence, all that exists has its self. That is the True, that is the Self, and thou, Shvetaketu, art That'. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*). The Truth to be asserted must be 'my' own realization, there is no escape from this position, call it solipsism or singularism, whatever one may.

Now this awareness cannot be questioned in any way. Its origin cannot be an object of enquiry, for we cannot be aware of any state more fundamental than awareness and to think that there may be non-awareness pre-



ceding or conditioning awareness is a self-contradictory proposition. Objects of awareness such as the world of things may come out of nothing, for this nothing or non-existence of all objects is itself an object of awareness, but awareness cannot come out of non-awareness, for the latter is never a possible state. It is a meaningless term. Now it may be thought that in deep dreamless sleep we have such non-awareness or absolute nought. But that is untenable. For, how is it that on waking we feel we slept well? We have a memory of the direct awareness of existence of objects as (perceptually or sensuously) unknown during sleep. This direct intuition or awareness is denied by some who argue that there was but absence of sense-objects during sleep, no positive awareness of this absence. But how is this absence known? They say this absence of sense-knowledge is known by inference from the absence of psychical conditions of knowledge, e.g. absence of attention. But this is untenable. For, first, the absence of conditions of knowledge and absence of knowledge of objects (i.e. absence of objects as known) must be known to have universal concomitance between them before the inference can take place, and this is impossible without having a direct awareness of absence of knowledge. In fact, absence of conditions of knowledge is inferred from the absence of knowledge which is directly intuited. If it is said that the absence of conditions of knowledge is not thus inferred, but from the inactivity of the senses during sleep, then it is also incorrect. For, inactivity of the senses is itself inferred from absence of conditions of knowledge which in its turn is inferred from an intuition of the absence of knowledge. To argue that inactivity of the senses is not thus inferred, but from a sense of ease we experience after sleep, is also incorrect, for no causal relation between the two have been experienced and similar sense of ease may be experienced even when the senses are active, as for instance, in a composed state of the mind when there is balance and harmony of the mental activities.

The above incidentally shows that what are

known as psychical and physical conditions of awareness are not the productive cause of awareness which is autonomous and self-subsisting and which employs the so-called conditions as means of expression. And there are cases of awareness of sense-objects without the senses being employed. Such extra-sensory perception (E.S.P.) is now an intriguing subject for the psychologists.

To return to our original contention, a condition of non-awareness is meaningless and the experience of deep dreamless sleep cannot provide any meaning to the term. There is awareness of absence of sense-knowledge during deep sleep and not any pure absence of sense-knowledge or pure nought. In death too we cannot conceive of a pure nought to descend, for we can be aware of an absence of all sense-knowledge (of objects), but not of non-awareness. To argue that this non-awareness may be inferred from absence of conditions of knowledge after death is again to fall into fallacies already pointed out.

Thus awareness is the ground of everything and nothing can exist in the universe of things and thought that cannot be placed with reference to awareness. Now the problem is to grade the items of this universe with regard to the manner in which we are aware of them. There are different grades or levels of awareness in order of comprehension and essence. The more comprehensive and essential awareness is implied by the lesser one, to understand which fully we must have the higher order of awareness. Again, the higher order of awareness holds its lower one as a contingent product and modification of the higher which is immanent in the lower, yet which is not wholly immanent, but transcendent also, for how else can the lower be felt as incomplete and eventually lighted up by the higher, seen through, and sublated? The lower is the self-obscurance by the higher of itself, which, as it were, in a spirit of sport forgets itself and projects a world it (in a deluded mood, as a lower self) takes for reality. When this self-forgetfulness is not complete, it views the projected world in a make-believe spirit,



enjoying it as the illusory taken deliberately for reality. In any case, this is veiling and distorting one's own real nature. Yet this real nature remains the basis of the illusory world which is never self-complete, ever pointing to the higher which, after its temporary lapse, comes to its own. This game of self-losing and self-restoring, projecting and sublating, in various degrees and in a serial manner, stage by stage, is a characteristic of awareness which, as has been pointed out, throughout the modifications remains in each level transcendent of the lower; then, it only loses self-awareness and works unconsciously from behind (or above) the lower and conscious level which becomes its mode of manifestation and contains in an implicit form the higher awareness. When this becomes explicit, that is, the higher wakes to self-consciousness, the lower appears illusory and vanishes. Hence awareness in itself, the highest level, is already implicit in its lower modes, and only becomes explicit gradually and by stages when they prove illusory and break up, following the silent will of the highest awareness.

## II. THE DREAM-AWARENESS: ART AND IMAGINATION

Now let us briefly examine the various orders of awareness starting from the lowest. This is the dream-awareness (including awareness in illusory perception which is a kind of dream). It is a modification of the wakeful awareness which is presupposed by it and which is present in it in an implicit manner or disguised form. The dream appears to be a continuation of the world of wakeful awareness; there is reference in it of the latter which is taken as real, whereas the wakeful awareness regards the dream as false. Again, the dream-world cannot exist without the wakeful one, whereas the reverse is not true. The wakeful awareness, giving us the empirical world as the object and the wakeful self as the subject, is more comprehensive and essential than the dream-awareness with its dream-

world as the object and the dreaming self as subjective counterpart of the latter.

This wakeful awareness is immanent in the dream-awareness in the sense that the latter takes itself to be a continuation of the former which remains the standard of reality, but this wakeful awareness remains transcendent too. For, we are not totally unaware of the wakeful world in our sleep or dream; we wake up at the appointed hour, the mother wakes up as soon as the baby cries, while she sleeps on even if greater noise be about her. There are many other facts of this nature. And then, sooner or later, this higher awareness asserts itself and comes to its own. It is the immediate creator and enjoyer of the dream-awareness that is an offshoot from it. The wakeful awareness, not being satisfied with the variety of the wakeful world that is rather rigid and stereotyped, projects or conjures up another world freer and more flexible, answering to its wishes and desires. To the question why we do have horrid and fearful dreams, the answer is that the wakeful awareness loves these for the mere love of variety and of display of freedom and creative activity. It hungers for experience of all kinds, for variety and intensity of emotions. We express this fact of which we are implicitly aware in our introspective mood, by saying that we *unconsciously* wish and enjoy every experience for its own sake. Since the dream-world is conjured up in order to fulfil emotional satisfaction, it has to be regarded as real while it lasts, for objects known as unreal do not give us as much emotion as those taken as real. But the dream breaks, sometimes due to external physical causes, conditions of sleep being then disturbed, but often due to internal psychical causes. And as modern psychologists have shown, the physical causes breaking sleep and dream, e.g. noise or thirst, are diverted away or moderated by this unconscious dream-mechanism which so interprets these stimuli that they fail to wake us up. Thus we dream of drinking water and then continue sleeping and dreaming other things instead of waking up for real



water. The transcendent wakeful awareness that is not wholly self-forgetful and immanent in the dream (to make it appear as the wakeful awareness), thus controls the dream from behind; but it comes to its own after remaining more or less unconscious for a while, watching the dream life, and asserts itself and activates the senses that are its handmaids. Often, even within the dream, we become faintly aware of the wakeful world and, so, aware of the dream-world as a shadow show. We also sometimes have the experience of producing dream-objects out of our own free will; simply through our wishing something to appear, we can make it appear. We then catch ourselves playing the trick of making something appear as objective which is really of our making. However, this world knowingly conjured up loses its grip on us and we soon have to either suppress or withdraw our wakeful awareness (as before sleep) which falls into unconsciousness, or to lose the dream-weaving capacity. The dream vanishes as the wakeful awareness fully asserts itself or manifests itself through determinate sense-knowledge. The dream-awareness appears to the wakeful awareness as a parasite (on the latter), but the reverse cannot be asserted. The dream is nourished by the wakeful awareness and the dream cannot deny this while it poses as the wakeful awareness (though it cannot also assert this); but this latter awareness never takes anything from the dream which it explicitly knows as illusory. This is the reason why the dream-awareness is placed lower in grade to wakeful awareness as explained before.

Imagination and fancy, both natural and artistic, reveal a kind of awareness that is dream-awareness in essence ; only, in this case the objects conjured up are not so vivid and real, for the wakeful awareness is not so unself-conscious as in dreams. Here the wakeful awareness is more openly creating and enjoying the imaginary world projected by it, but the faith in the projected world is not as much as in dreams and so the emotional intensity is also poorer. The variety of emo-

tional effects is also comparatively limited for the imaginary world can enjoy less freedom and flexibility than the dream-world. We cannot have in imagination all those weird scenes, figures, and events suggesting strange emotions which we have in dreams, for in dreams our wakeful awareness is much less interfering, being much less self-conscious, than in imagination. An event that appears very improbable in imagination and, so, very little emotionally effective, does not appear the least improbable in a dream, though in dreams too we have a faint and dormant awareness of the wakeful world so that outrageously nonsensical objects or situations shock us out of dream. Because, imaginative awareness stands beside the waking awareness which is not so much held in abeyance or kept unconscious as in dream. We are conscious of the imaginary world as such, knowing it as a make-believe one; we have a detachment with regard to it which is almost absent in the case of the dream-world. This detachment, known technically as psychical distance or aesthetic disinterestedness, is one of the conditions of aesthetic delight which is regarded as impersonal. In the imaginative awareness we have, as Coleridge pointed out, a willing suspension of disbelief, whereas in the dream-awareness we are not conscious of this deliberate activity of the will which, however, works from behind the scenes, being transcendently operative.

The imaginary world of everyday life and of art is a dream-world that has lost much of its vividness and freedom for want of that extreme switching off (or pushing behind the scenes) of the wakeful awareness achieved in dream-awareness. Its pattern is the same as the dream-world and like the latter its terms of reference are the wakeful world which is thus immanently present in it. The liberty taken with the wakeful awareness in the creation of the imaginary world is less than in the dream-world, for the wakeful world is now already at the margin of consciousness and the deviations from it do not go unmarked. The memory-world is a step beyond the imaginary



one towards the wakeful world, the memory-objects being known as representations of the latter world. Memory-awareness is the awareness of imaginary objects as copies of the real objects. This wakeful reality is thus taken as the rigid standard for this kind of awareness with no scope for liberty in the creation of the memory-images.

In all these three varieties of the awareness of the unreal or shadow worlds, there is a natural delight, noticed particularly in the case of artistic imagination by many aestheticians. This delight is an accompaniment and immediate product of the activity of awareness that conjures up or bodies forth objects tingling with emotions. It is a projection or objectification of emotions in sensuous form. The awareness of the shadow world is at once the experience of various emotions, both pleasur-

able and painful, and the delight proceeds from the awareness itself, the creative exercise and the objects and experiences creatively enjoyed. Thus every dream is somehow enjoyable and all art, both tragedy and comedy, in fact, imaginative and recollecting activity, irrespective of their pleasure-pain quality, is agreeable. Awareness in any of its grades is, after all, awareness that has willingly modified itself into the lower forms in such a way that partly immanent in a form, it transcends it also and retracts it any moment. This awareness is essentially delightful. It is thus *saccidānanda* (being-awareness-bliss). The more we are explicitly aware of the higher forms of awareness the more will be the sense of creation and participation in the essence of awareness, and so, more will be the delight.

(To be continued)

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND THE LEGACY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY DEVABRATA SINHA

India presents through the ages a vital flow of a distinct cultural heritage which is significant for its characteristically philosophic outlook that views existence and life against a background, broad and profound. The Supreme Truth has been revealed through the illumined consciousness of her great souls down from the age of the Vedas and the Upanishads. And in the light of their wisdom through realization and enlightened experience, values of life have been stressed in all their intensity and harmony. This is the spirit of Indian culture which we can trace in the depths of her indigenous thoughts, striving for a complete and integrated philosophy of life. We have to remember that philosophy, in the larger sense of the term, is 'the unseen foundation on

which the structure of civilization rests'.<sup>1</sup> The Indian spiritual tradition—(Sanātana Dharma), which embodies the spirit of Indian culture, has been vindicated more than once by the rationally thought out systems of philosophy. It is, again, her prophets and sages who have from time to time preserved and enlarged upon that tradition, emphasizing the godward endeavour of the human spirit.

### THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY OF INDIA

Vedanta, which has its source in the Upanishads, is generally recognized as the dominant and representative philosophy of India. Indeed, in Vedanta we find the apex of the philosophical genius of the Hindu race.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: *Kalki or The Future of Civilization*.



The tenets of wisdom, springing from the Upanishads, were nurtured and intellectually stabilized by the philosophic endeavour of later ages. Since the eighth century A.D. when, after the decline of Buddhism, it was revived and reasserted by the great genius of Shankaracharya, Vedanta philosophy has taken firm roots in the life and thought of the people, from the highest to the lowest.

However, in referring here to Vedanta—which is rather a comprehensive term—what is meant is the Advaita Vedanta which marks the highest and most rational synthesis arrived at by the Indian mind. Other systems of Vedanta such as Qualified Monism and Dualism are also based on the Upanishads and the *Brahma-Sūtras*, apart from numerous other scriptures. But the Advaita, without directly contradicting any other system, comprehends them all under a deeper synthetic unity. This philosophy of Advaita is the most satisfying formulation of the distinctive spirit of Hinduism, and in this sense it may be regarded as a synthesis of other systems of Indian philosophy, all of which seek to formulate this spirit; and it has also explicitly influenced the historical evolution of Hinduism. We may now turn to the study of how the same philosophic tradition of Vedantic thought and culture has exerted its inevitable influence towards a great spiritual renaissance in modern India in the shape of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement.

Vedanta represents such a broad and universal gospel for mankind that men in all ages have come to it for guidance in the path to perfection and ultimate realization through the eternal values that it steadily preserves. The makers of modern India, who have ushered in the new age, have all drawn inspiration in some form or other from the Vedanta philosophy. The synthetic outlook and the bold vision of harmony and unity, supported through and through by reason, have earned for this perennial philosophy of India a place of supreme honour. The intelligent acceptance of the spirit of Vedanta, in the light of the needs of contemporary society, is conspicuous in the

wake of the great spiritual renaissance ushered in by Sri Ramakrishna and fostered by Swami Vivekananda.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

Long years of political subjection, it is needless to say, sapped the national vitality of this great and potent sub-continent. The economic exploitation and social disintegration which the alien administration was instrumental in bringing about naturally affected the cultural life of the people as a whole. An indifference towards our own culture, strengthened by blind imitation of Western culture and life, gradually crept in and there arose a sort of disrespect for the Indian way of life. The force of the Upanishadic heritage had gradually weakened in the course of centuries of political vicissitudes in the arena of Indian history. Consequently, the large mass of people ignored the teachings of Vedanta amidst the prevailing intellectual callousness and confusion. Vedanta, in theory and much less in practice, remained restricted within the intellectual deliberations of a few pundits. The great tradition of the Sanatana Dharma lay in a dormant state, only needing to be revitalized by the sparks of some genius, with the bold vision of linking the changing present with the glorious past.

Speaking of modern India, it was Rammohan Roy, the great intellectual and pioneer, who ushered in a bright phase of cultural regeneration. We find him reviving the Vedanta traditions, with a bold grasp of our age-old principles underlying the Indian way of life and thought. Rammohan Roy propagated the ideas of universalism and common brotherhood, basing them on the unitarian doctrine of the Upanishads. Through his keenly intellectual vindication of the spirit of Vedanta and his emphasis on religious monism as the ideal of life, Rammohan Roy did great service in the direction of the large-scale spiritual revival that came later to stem the tide of Western materialism.

The most striking phase of Vedantic revival, after Rammohan Roy, is to be found in the



great Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, beginning from the end of the nineteenth century. Sri Ramakrishna, through his uniquely religious life, brought about a thorough upheaval in the spiritual life of the country. It was Rammohan Roy, as we have already seen, who restored and enunciated the thread of Vedantic thought and culture, recognizing it to be the true genius of India. In it he saw the force of social dynamism which he tried to utilize for the new awakening of a sense of larger social solidarity and emancipation. But in Sri Ramakrishna we find a *living* embodiment of the Vedantic ideal of life, in its best expression in the present age. Sri Ramakrishna attained the highest state of divine bliss and reached the supreme 'Unity in the Godhead' through his manifold Sādhana. With pure simplicity, strengthened by his intense realization, unhampered by intellectual sophistication, he demonstrated effectively the sublime truths of spiritual life.

Sri Ramakrishna taught the immanence of the Supreme One in the world. True to the Upanishadic way of *Brahma-darśana*, Sri Ramakrishna signified the truth that religion is a matter of experience and not merely an intellectual endeavour. He often urged the futility of discursive and dry reasoning, without direct experience of Truth. His stress on the need for the realization of the Supreme One and the relativity of the phenomenal universe is unmistakable. To his enlightened sense only God was real and all else unreal. Sri Ramakrishna's persistent search for the Godhead as the supreme, ultimate principle, by diverse paths, had culminated in his realization of the Advaita through Nirvikalpa Samādhi. He had reached, through Advaita Sadhana, the transcendental and impersonal aspect of God. Yet, the striking feature of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings is his organic synthesis between Jñāna and Bhakti. He harmonized both the aspects of the Supreme, viz. the personal or Ishvara and the impersonal or Brahman. 'God is formless and God is with form too, and He is that which transcends both form and formlessness.

He alone can say what else He is'. He represented them as the two aspects of the same Godhead, viewed through the two attitudes of pure knowledge and pure devotion respectively. And, while accepting the world as impermanent (*anitya*), having no ultimate significance, he also recognized its empirical (*vyāvahārika*) importance. Hence his stress on the need for the cultivation of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairāgya (renunciation or detachment), both of which are key-concepts in Vedantic discipline. And, above all, Sri Ramakrishna taught the divinity of man and the harmony of religions. The Upanishadic dictum—'Thou art That' (*tat-tvam-asi*) re-echoed with full vigour in his message—'Jiva is Shiva'. He urged men to realize their own Self, the living God, seated in the heart of every being. Sri Ramakrishna, reiterating this noble principle—'Jiva is Shiva', expounded it with immense significance for application in the wide social context. Hence he prescribed the service of man. Man is thus restored to his original dignity and magnitude. He recognized very aptly the stages in this spiritual development of man which Vedānta so radically emphasized.

According to Sri Ramakrishna, true Self-recognition, in all its integrity, amounts to the realization of the Supreme. He exhorted spiritual aspirants to be mindful of the practical disciplines for a truer life, especially complete purification of mind and inner detachment. In all his teachings Sri Ramakrishna relived the ancient Vedantic traditions and revealed to the modern mind the wider and deeper appeal of Vedānta. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says of him, 'He is an illustrious example of the mystical tradition which runs right through the religious history of this country from the days of the Vedic Rishis'.<sup>2</sup>

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND RESURGENT INDIA

Swami Vivekananda, the great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, brought down from the immense source, in the summit of

<sup>2</sup> Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: 'Introduction to *The Cultural Heritage of India*'.



Revelation that Sri Ramakrishna was, the perennial stream, through manifold courses. Vivekananda directly inherited the spiritual potency of the great Master and united it with the living currents of Vedanta inherent in the depths of Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda's contribution is so vast and varied that we could at best confine ourselves to a very brief survey of Vedantic thought as it has been propounded by this great leader of modern India, in its comprehensive totality, in a manner suitable to the needs of the times.

Vivekananda's was a dynamic, broad, and complete philosophy of life. With him Vedanta was not a mere intellectual dogma or doctrine but the true basis of all social and moral progress. He brought out the vital potencies of Vedanta that lay hidden behind creeds, dogmas, and rituals. He revitalized the message of Vedanta in all its completeness. In Vedanta he found not merely the faith for a personal religion but a great force for the collective welfare of man. He insisted on a deeper acceptance of life in all its sanctity and sublimity. Vivekananda held forth the immortal message of *abhih* (fearlessness) and self-expansion which the Upanishads preached so boldly. Indeed, his teachings were the exposition of the eternal and universal truths the Upanishads contain. The uniqueness of Vivekananda's application of Vedanta to life lay in his interpretation of the broad basis of Advaita under which the diverse forms of Vedanta were comprehended. The three schools of Vedanta,—Dvaita, Vishishtādvaita, and Advaita—formed, as it were, the three stages of approach to Reality, the culmination being reached in Advaita. Advaita Vedanta is a harmonious doctrine of unity-in-variety, underlying the entire religious life of India, at the same time containing within it the basis for a universal religion of mankind.

One important feature of Vivekananda's message is his teaching of the divinity of man. The first essential in religion, according to him, is to realize the true status of man. His earnest exhortation was: 'Never forget the glory of human nature. We are the

greatest God that ever was or ever will be'. Underlying his inspiring teachings on the dignity of man was the Vedantic idea of 'I am Brahman' (*aham Brahmāsmi*) and the inherent faith in the infinity and immortality of the soul (*ātman*). This central truth of the divinity of man served to restore and re-establish the faith of man in himself. To his countrymen, who had lost confidence in themselves, owing to years of political subjugation, Vivekananda pointed out the Upanishadic dictum of strength invincible (*'nāyamātmā balahinena labhyah'*). He emphasized the great message of strength and exclaimed, 'He is an atheist who does not believe in himself'. He was of the firm opinion that the Vedantic truths of the divinity of the soul and the oneness of existence would serve on the one hand to unite the people of India by harmonizing their superficial differences and on the other to infuse enormous strength into the nation. The perennial truths of Vedanta, of the ultimate unity of man with God, directly give rise to the idea of the universal brotherhood of man, and, at the same time, form the basis of our moral and social life.

Advaita in practice formed, as it were, the core of Vivekananda's teachings. In a letter, he says: 'I am a Vedantist. Sachchidānanda—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute is my God. I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of my own Self'.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the doctrine of Maya he said, 'Maya is not a theory for the explanation of the world; it is simply a statement of facts as they exist'.<sup>4</sup> The world we live in is full of contradictions. And one must make one's way through this network of phenomenal existence to the domain of eternal Freedom which is the very essence of our being. To comprehend the real nature of our being, unfettered by the shackles of Maya, is the supreme goal (Mukti). Indeed, absolute Freedom was the key-note of Vivekananda's message to humanity, as of his philosophy of life. Referring to Vive-

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*.

<sup>4</sup> Lecture on 'Maya and Illusion', in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II.



kananda's majestic urge for Freedom, Romain Rolland, his great biographer, says: 'This ceaseless effort to escape from a closed trap has communicated a passion for freedom—ever fresh, ardent, and untiring—to all Indian geniuses, whether divine incarnations, wise philosophers, or poets; but I know few examples so striking as the personality of Vivekananda'.<sup>5</sup>

We see that another remarkable feature of Vivekananda's treatment of Vedanta is the formulation of what he called 'Practical Vedanta'. His aim was to present Vedanta in an understandable manner so that it could be practised by one and all. The supreme ideal of Oneness propounded by him was not a mere intellectual or theoretical doctrine but an active, living principle of life to be followed by men and women in every walk of life. He pointed out: 'In various Upanishads we find that this Vedanta philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forest only but that the very best parts of it were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in the everyday affairs of life'.<sup>6</sup> Vedanta requires us to combine harmoniously the actual with the ideal and relate intimately the present life to the Life Eternal. Vivekananda lays down the ethics of Vedanta in and through the positive ideas of the oneness of existence and the service of man. God is 'the Oneness, the Unity of all, the Reality of all life and all existence'. His positive and all-comprehending enunciation of 'Practical Vedanta' may be summed up, in his own words: 'In one word the ideal of Vedanta is to know man as he really is, and this is its message, that if you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how can you worship a God who is unmanifested?'<sup>7</sup> The transformed state of affairs that the Vedantic attitude to life would bring about, consequent on one's realization of one's divine nature, is expressed by him as follows:

<sup>5</sup> Romain Rolland: *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*.

<sup>6</sup> *Practical Vedanta*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

'When we have become free, we need not go mad and throw up society and rush off to die in the forest or the cave; we shall remain where we were, only we shall understand the whole thing'.<sup>8</sup> By its insistence on a deeper and more harmonious combination of Contemplation and Action, of Jñāna and Karma, Practical Vedanta served to fulfil the task begun by the earlier apparently exclusively metaphysical Vedanta.

No mundane distinctions of birth, caste, or creed, can place disabilities on the individual in his freedom to pursue the path of spiritual attainment. What matters is the stage of the individual's self-culture. This was fully recognized by Vivekananda. 'Take every man where he stands and push him forward'—was his advice. He desired that religious teaching should always be constructive, never destructive or condemnatory, because religion, as he has often declared, is the manifestation of the divinity (or perfection) already in man.

Man commits no sin but only error. Ordinarily errors are committed because of weakness or fear, which, in turn, arise from ignorance. Vivekananda taught that man has to become divine by realizing the Divine, by conquering Nature—external and internal. His was the Religion of Truth and Advaita was its firm foundation. 'Truth and nothing but truth, is the watchword of the Advaitist'.<sup>9</sup> In accordance with the principle of Adhikāribheda, Vivekananda very well recognized the importance of the several symbolic forms of worship prescribed for various types of spiritual aspirants. 'The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized or thought of or stated through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are so many symbols, so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on'.<sup>10</sup>

Taking his stand on the rational funda-

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* we find the exhortation: 'satyameva jayate'.

<sup>10</sup> 'Paper on Hinduism', *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I.



mentals of Vedanta, Vivekananda formulated his Ideal of a Universal Religion. The concept of Yoga served as a key to this synthetic formulation,—Yoga with its fourfold division, viz. Rāja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga, meant for persons of different types and temperaments. This central concept of a Universal Religion, emphasized by Vivekananda, would ever serve as the common ground of all religions of the world and go to unite the whole of mankind. That religion is 'the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes' can hardly be challenged. 'It is being and becoming'.<sup>11</sup> Inasmuch as this forms the essence of religion, doctrines or dogmas or rituals or other outer forms have only secondary importance. The intuitive experimental aspect of religion, viz. that religion ultimately is a matter of realization and actual Becoming (*aparokṣānubhūti*) was reiterated by Vivekananda who looked upon Vedanta as 'the rationale of religion'.

Throughout his teachings, Vivekananda strove to effect the much-desired reorientation of Vedanta, directly applying the wisdom of the ancient Rishis to the solution of the problems of the present age. Modern and practical Vedanta, as it was incarnate in Swami Vivekananda, the prophet and patriot of India, had its roots in the ageless tradition, and reinvigorated the flow of national genius along right channels, restoring the dignity of and the people's faith in the motherland. Vedanta

no longer remained any rigidly orthodox, uncompromising, 'other-worldly' doctrine. At the hands of Vivekananda it received a strength and dynamism unprecedented in the recent religious history of the land. It enabled Indians to draw nourishment from the life-giving ideas and ideals of Vedanta in all its integrity and completeness.

Though one could never ascribe any particular school of Vedanta to Swami Vivekananda, yet it may be seen that he laid great and important stress, and that rightly so, on Advaita—which he held would become the foundation of the future religion of thinking humanity. He imparted a synthetic completeness and a practical importance to the essential tenets of the religion and philosophy of the Vedas. 'Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love'.<sup>12</sup> With his stupendous intellect and unparalleled energy, not to speak of his discerning spiritual vision, Vivekananda has given a wholly new shape to Vedanta, basing his universal gospel on it. As on the one hand he realized the greatness of humanity, so on the other, he visualized the unity and glory of the awakened India. He exhorted his countrymen with the clarion call of the Upanishads—'*Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varānnibodhata*',<sup>13</sup> himself rendering it as, 'Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached'.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion', *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II.

<sup>12</sup> *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*.

<sup>13</sup> *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, I. iii.14.

"To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry Philosophy and intricate Mythology and queer startling Psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate Mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical Psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work."

—Swami Vivekananda



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The story, *Three Obedient Disciples*, is adapted from the third chapter of the Ādi Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. . . .

In all religions the superconscious state is identical, though there are variations in the expositions of the same. Briefly expounding the theory and practice of Rāja (or Kundalini) Yoga, Swami Yatiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission describes the psychic centres (or Chakras) of Yogic power, which are, as it were, *The Secret Stairs to Superconsciousness*. . . .

The Pancharatras form a very important branch of the Religion of Bhakti. The Bhakta, with single-minded devotion to God, renounces all attachments and desires and sees Vāsudeva in all beings and all beings in Vasudeva. Prof. Baladeva Upadhyaya, M.A., Sahityacharya, of the Banaras Hindn University, makes an analytical and illuminating survey of *The Philosophy of the Pancharatras*, which is well known in the religious history of India and has exerted considerable influence on the social and cultural life of the people. . . .

Sri Pravas Jivan Chaudhury, M.Sc., P.R.S., D.PHIL. of Viswabharati University, with whose admirable writings our readers are already familiar, contributes a learned and thought-provoking article on the important aspects of *Vedanta Phenomenology*. This scholarly study of transcendental phenomenology reveals the author's profound knowledge of philosophy and science, both ancient and modern. . . .

In *The Cultural Background and the Legacy of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda*, Sri Devabrata Sinha, M.A., a new and welcome contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, investigates the process of cultural and spiritual renaissance in India since the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

### VEDANTA AND THE WEST

On the evening of 26th March 1952 a new chapel was dedicated at the Vedanta Society, 34 west 71st street, New York City, N. Y., U.S.A. It was a truly inspiring and holy experience, demonstrating practically the Vedantic thesis that there is the same Truth in all religions. Ministers of five different religions heartily joined in offering prayers and invoking blessings on the Chapel.

Swami Pavitrananda, Head of the Vedanta Society, sounded the spiritual key-note of the great occasion and gave a brief but comprehensive outline of Vedantic teaching. Touching on the history of the Society, he told of the founding of the Society by Swami Vivekananda and the carrying on of the work by other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Akhilananda of the Vedanta Centres of Boston and Providence spoke of the spiritual message of Hinduism and its important impact upon the West. He was followed by Venerable Hosan Seki, Minister of the New York Buddhist Church, who offered a prayer in Japanese. Rabbi Samuel Segal of the Mt. Nebo Temple of New York read from the Old Testament in Hebrew and prayed in Hebrew. Reverend Allen E. Claxton, Minister of the Broadway Temple Methodist Church of New York, recited from the Epistles in the New Testament and offered his Christian prayer. Mr. Abraham Chowdhury, representative of Islam, concluded the prayers with an invocation in Arabic.

Mr. Christopher Isherwood, author and poet, with feeling humility spoke of his personal experiences and understanding of Vedanta and its application in the lives of all.

Mr. John van Druten, noted author and playwright, gave a masterful talk on Vedanta and the place of the chapel in our lives. He said:



'I would like to ask what this is that we are dedicating to-night. The invitation calls it a 'chapel'. Others may call it a church, or a temple. What do we mean by these words? What are they? There is a theory that a church is the residence of God—the home of God—a place set aside for worship for that reason, and therefore more holy, more sacred, more divine than other places.

'Do we believe this? Is not the teaching of the Advaita the fact that we ourselves are the temple, all of us? Is not our body the temple, our body and our minds, and the whole of the visible world? I heard the Swami say the other day that God is the world we see, and the world we do not see. God is the whole universe. God is All. God Is. Is that not our teaching?

'How often do we know this? How often do we see it? Very seldom. That is the mystical experience for which we all long—the only thing we know that we should all long for—a glimpse outside of reason of what is deeper than reason. That is the final unbandaging of our eyes. It happens just occasionally by the grace of God, as the grace of God, this momentary, revelatory experience of universal Godhead in everything we see, so that it is revealed in the very cups and railings as Vivekananda saw it. . . . When we have seen it, we need no church or chapel; we know that we do not need them. The church or chapel is everywhere and in everything. But when we do not see it, when it is removed again from our awareness, when we feel the bandages on our eyes once more, then we need that chapel as a memorial, a mark of that unbandaging if we have ever felt it, a symbol that we believe in it and long for it, if we have it not'.

Interpreting broadly but briefly the meaning of religion, the learned speaker observed:

'What is our religion? I should omit that word "our". What is religion? A belief and an understanding of what the world is about. What do all the outer forms of religion teach and believe in? Three things, as Vivekananda has told us: sin, men, books.

Sin, especially. Sin is an essential to the forms and shows of most religious beliefs. But true religion—and I do not mean our religion, but religion as I have learned to see it wholly, as the basis of all religious faith—does not, cannot believe in sin. At best, it can believe only in mistakes, in ignorance, in going the wrong way to find that unbandaging.

'There are pictures on the walls here, and there are texts. What are these? They are signs of the right way, of the men who have found the right way, of words that may help us to the right way. They are signs on the right road, direction posts, milestones, bits and pieces of maps. That is all.

'Do we believe in a personal God, personally reincarnated? Vivekananda said that the impersonal God, when seen through the eyes of sense, becomes personal, and that His incarnation seems a personal one to us. He is incarnated so as many times as we need so to see it. Yet if God is impersonal, the personal eyes which present that personal sense are what is wrong. We need the removal of those personal bandages that make us see that way. The bandages are the signs of what we need to be delivered from'.

Ending his talk on the theme that all present were there in dedication of themselves in the search of the Truth that religion is all-embracing, Mr. van Druten said:

'All the churches, the books, the prayers to that outside personal God are what Vivekananda called the kindergarten of religion. Even this chapel that we are dedicating to-night is only a piece of that kindergarten. But it is a beautiful and a needed one. We are still children, in need of that unbandagement, and this is one of the places in which we may be helped to find it. We all feel that we need friends, and advisers, and doctors, and helpers, believing that we cannot exist or carry on alone. This is right if we mean by "alone" the independent existence of our so-called separate selves, and that is normally what we do mean when we say that. It is wrong if we know what we truly are, if we



know that no man is ever alone in that way unless he wishes to be, unless he is deluded into being. This is one of the places where we can learn that.

'At our best we feel that we must talk to God, our friend and teacher, or that we must listen to God and ask Him to talk to us. We feel that our homes, our personal lives are no place in which to meet or to receive that Friend. These have not yet been cleaned, they are too full of smoke and drink and sex and income-tax, and of desires and obsessions. That is why we feel that we need chapels, because they are better, cleaner places, until we learn that all places are the same, and

then our own homes will have nothing left to be cleaned of, and we will understand that the Friend is our own essence and the essence of all living.

'This chapel is the meeting-place for all men of any form of religion, where they can come together to hear the truth that embraces all, and makes all religions one—the truth that religion is an all-embracing experience. That is the basic teaching that we call Vedanta. We are here to-night for the dedication to the search for that last unbandaging; I would call it rather the dedication of ourselves to that search'.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MAHATMA (LIFE OF M. K. GANDHI) (Vol. III). BY D. G. TENDULKAR, *Distributors: Publications Department, The Times of India Press, Fort, Bombay 1. Pages 416. Price Rs. 25.*

This third volume of the monumental eight-volume biography of Mahatma Gandhi, undertaken by the learned author D. G. Tendulkar, amply keeps up the uniformity of standard of the two previous volumes, both in the skilful handling of the wealth of biographical material as well as the array of highly useful illustrations and documents in facsimile and in the manner of its get-up and printing. The first two volumes gave us glimpses of the evolution of Gandhiji's personality in the light of the political, social, and religious movements which tended to transform the outlook of the Indian people. The story of Gandhiji's life up to the year 1929, covered by the two previous volumes, showed the revolution which Gandhiji effected in the policy of the Congress—from an attitude of meek subservience to and forced collaboration with the foreign power to one of bold challenge and non-co-operation in the name of the 'dumb millions of India'. The second volume appropriately closed with the passing of the famous resolution on complete independence at the Lahore session of the Congress.

The present volume takes up the thread of the narrative and covers the period from 1929 to 1934. This period, packed with events of great import for India and the world at large, is dealt with in the usual masterly manner, quoting, as before,

original sources where necessary. The technique of Satyagraha, as a means for effecting a non-violent transformation of society, reached its perfection in the historic Dandi March of Gandhiji (1930), undertaken to defy salt laws imposed on a people already burdened with taxes and groaning under poverty. The 'veiled form of martial law' which was let loose by the powers that be, the subsequent dramatic arrest of Gandhiji on the midnight of 4th May 1930, the storm of protests throughout the land, and the unabated enthusiasm with which Gandhiji's followers carried on the agitation form some of the most readable narrations in the biography. The next phase of Gandhiji's life, viz. the dominant role he played in the Round Table Conference held in London in 1931 (which he attended under the mandate from the Karachi session of the Congress) occupies a considerable part of this volume. The learned biographer reveals how this visit to the West gave Gandhiji ample opportunities for a study of Western social organization at close quarters and also for coming into personal contact with eminent savants like Romain Rolland and some political leaders. His contact with Western society convinced him all the more of the futility of a social organization based on force, and of the efficacy of non-violence as a broad basis for a peaceful reconstruction of society. His presence in the West, the simplicity of his life, and his firm advocacy of the philosophy of non-violence made a profound impression on many people there who hailed him as the 'spiritual ambassador of India'.



The year 1932, after his return from the R.T.C. in London, saw Gandhiji face to face with various intriguing situations in India created by the then Government in order to alienate the so-called 'untouchables' or the depressed classes—'Harijans', as Gandhiji loved to call them—from the body-politic. In addition there was the wave of repression following nationalist upsurge in various parts of India and the arrest of the leaders of the country. The arrest of Gandhiji on 4th January 1932, his epic fast in the cause of justice for the depressed classes, and his negotiations with leaders of different parties for an agreed settlement on the issue, are narrated with admirable clarity and accuracy.

The important phase of Gandhiji's activities in the cause of the upliftment of the Harijans forms the concluding portion of the book. As a medium for the expression of his views on such burning social questions, Gandhiji started the weekly *Harijan* in February 1933. His all-India tour (begun in 1933) in the cause of the Harijans, his untiring efforts for the relief of the people who suffered as a result of the great earthquake in Bihar, and his inauguration of the Swadeshi movement (in 1934) after the conclusion of his Harijan

tour bring us to the end of the present volume. This period of Gandhiji's life ends with the severance of his formal connection with the Congress. Nevertheless Gandhiji and Congress remained inseparable.

Great as he was as a political leader, Gandhiji was greater as a friend of the masses. This blend of a hero in action, a humanist, and a seeker after Truth, makes Gandhiji a unique personality in history. We congratulate the author for presenting this side of Gandhiji's personality faithfully and objectively. Moreover, the biographer has maintained the continuity of the narrative in the three volumes published. While political events are elaborately presented in their true perspective, the biography yet retains its human interest as a document of invaluable significance on the life and activities of one who synthesized great spiritual idealism and intense political fervour. Personal touches by the author, at places, regarding Gandhiji's life, add grace and dignity to the work.

Appendices I and II are two important—hitherto unpublished—letters of Gandhiji, one to Jawaharlal Nehru and the other to Vallabh Bhai Patel, stating reasons for severing his formal connection with the Congress.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL, CALCUTTA

#### GOLDEN JUBILEE AN APPEAL

Miss Margaret E. Noble, better known as Sister Nivedita, was the Founder of this Girls' School named after her. As a true disciple of Swami Vivekananda she could enter into the very spirit of Vedanta as reflected in the institutions and achievements of this country, and lay the foundations of a type of training and culture for our women which would gradually enable them to bring life into harmony with higher ideals.

In November 1898 Sister Nivedita had the institution inaugurated by the Holy Mother in the presence of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and other leading disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. In 1918 it was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission.

For more than half a century this institution has been striving for the spread of education among women, with a staff of workers proud of the noble sacrifice and example of the distinguished Sister. Education was given free of cost till 1947, when,

for the first time, fees became payable in the Secondary Section only. Besides regular students many respectable ladies received education from here and many poor women got free vocational training from the Industrial Section and were enabled, to some extent, to earn their livelihood.

Taking the vow of poverty and self-denial, Sister Nivedita dedicated her life to the cause of education for women. Her contribution towards India's struggle for freedom has been no less important.

The authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School have decided to offer their homage to the memory of the great Founder by organizing the School's Golden Jubilee Celebrations according to the following proposed scheme:

(1) The Golden Jubilee to be celebrated for one week in December, 1952.

(2) An authentic and detailed biography of Sister Nivedita to be published both in English and Bengali.

(3) A brief history of the School to be published.

(4) To bring out a historical review of the education of women in ancient India.



(5) To offer wreaths at the Sister's Memorial Pillar at the Darjeeling crematorium.

(6) To organize an essay competition on the life and work of Sister Nivedita among girls' schools of West Bengal.

(7) To arrange an exhibition of arts and crafts.

(8) To organize a public meeting to pay homage to the memory of the Sister.

(9) To arrange a reunion of old students of the Nivedita Girls' School.

(10) To organize sports and social performances by the present students.

(11) To make gifts of uniforms to the children of the Primary Section.

(12) To make an endowment to the Calcutts University for a Scholarship.

(13) To endow a fund with the University enabling it to award a gold medal annually to a talented student.

(14) To buy a piece of land for the development of the Industrial Section.

To give effect to the above scheme a sum of about Rs. 1,00,000 will be needed. We appeal to the sympathetic and generous public to come forward and help the Nivedita Girls' School to make the Golden Jubilee Celebrations a complete success. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:

(1) Secretary, Nivedita Girls' School Golden Jubilee Fund,  
5, Nivedita Lane,  
Calcutta—3;

(2) General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,  
P. O. Belur Math,  
Dt. Howrah, West Bengal.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, VRINDABAN

#### REPORT FOR 1951

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, an up to date hospital with 55 beds, has completed the forty-fifth year of its useful existence. The following is a brief account of its work during 1951.

*Indoor Hospital:* The total number of general cases (including eye cases) treated during the year was 1,559, and that of surgical cases was 2,091. The number of admitted cases was the maximum reached in the whole history of the Sevashrama.

*Nanda Baba Eye Hospital:* The total of indoor admissions was 893 and the out-patients department treated 26,855 cases. 5,037 major and minor operations were performed.

*Outdoor Dispensary:* The total number of cases

treated during the year was 1,07,499 of which 33,041 were new. The number of surgical cases was 1,344.

*X-Ray Department:* 185 patients were examined in the department.

*Clinical Laboratory and Electro-therapy:* 1,468 samples of blood, urine, and sputum were examined during the year in the clinical laboratory. 31 cases were treated by Electro-therapy.

*Refugee Relief:* 14 refugee patients were treated in the indoor hospital and 9,142 in the outdoor dispensary.

*Pecuniary Help:* Monthly and occasional relief was given to 30 persons, the expenditure amounting to Rs. 253.

*Financial Position:* The total receipts for the year, under the General Fund, amounted to Rs. 50,781-2-6 and the total expenditure was Rs. 54,180-12-0, leaving a deficit of Rs. 3,399-9-6. At the beginning of every year the Sevashrama has to take a loan in order to enable it to proceed with the transactions under the General Fund. It is, therefore, essential that the Fund should close with a minimum balance of Rs. 10,000. As such more contributions for the General Fund from the generous public are needed.

*Needs:* (1) The Sevashrama, being situated just on the banks of the Jamuna, is threatened every year with floods. It is also in an out of the way locality and patients cannot avail themselves of its services easily and that to the desired extent. To obviate these difficulties, it has been decided to shift the Sevashrama to a more prominent and safe site near the Mathura-Vrindaban main road. The Sevashrama was given possession of this new site, measuring 22.76 acres, by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 1st October 1951. The total amount needed for the construction of the new hospital buildings, doctors' and nurses' quarters, monastery, shrine, etc., comes to Rs. 6,56,000. The management appeal to the generous public to contribute liberally for this genuine humanitarian project.

(2) The management of the Sevashrama is faced every year with the hard problem of raising about Rs. 20,000 towards the expenditure of the Sevashrama. It is, therefore, essential that the Permanent Fund of the Sevashrama should be considerably strengthened so that its finances may be stabilized to a reasonable extent. Persons desirous of endowing beds in memory of their friends and relatives may do so by kindly contributing Rs. 5,000 per bed.

Contributions in cash or kind may be sent to: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, Dist. Mathura, U.P.



## FAMINE IN 24-PARGANAS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S APPEAL

The public is already aware of the acute distress prevailing among the poor and some of the middle-class people in the district of 24-Parganas. There is scarcity of essential food-stuffs, specially rice, due to the famine condition prevalent in a good portion of the district. All visitors to these areas are moved to tears at the sad plight of thousands of ill-clad famished souls, begging for a morsel of food. Our representatives found that in each Union five to six thousand people on an average are affected, of whom about two thousand are severely hit owing to their lack of purchasing capacity. Utter starvation is threatening those helpless victims and is driving them to blank despair. Many women who come for doles wear tattered rags.

In the second week of June we purchased 250 maunds of rice, and since the third week we have been distributing doles in the Bhabanipur and Hingulganj Unions under Hasanabad P. S. and in Haroa P. S. The Government of West Bengal has sanctioned 1,000 maunds of rice and 1,000 maunds of Atta to be distributed by the Mission as gratuitous relief in the above two Thanas. Our survey of the affected area is continuing.

Large funds are required for this relief work, which has to be conducted on an extensive scale for some months. We appeal to the kind-hearted people all over the country to contribute liberally to our Relief Fund to enable us to mitigate the distress of our famine-stricken sisters and brothers. Contributions for the purpose will be thankfully received at the following addresses:

1. The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math (Howrah).
2. The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta-3.
3. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta-13.
4. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 111, Russa Rd., Calcutta-26.

Belur Math (Howrah)  
21-6-1952

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,  
*General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission*

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"Don't you see why I am starting orphanages, famine-relief works, etc.? Don't you see how Sister Nivedita, an English lady, has learnt to serve Indians so well, by doing even menial work for them? And can't you, being Indians, similarly serve your own fellow-countrymen? Go, all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. . . . Alas! the people of the country cannot get anything to eat, and how can we have the heart to raise food to our mouths? . . . Seeing the poor people of our country starving for food a desire comes to me to overthrow all ceremonial worship and learning, and go round from village to village collecting money from the rich by convincing them through force of character and Sadhana, and to spend the whole life in serving the poor."

—Swami Vivekananda



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY LAVINIA R. CLARK

Vivekananda, Swami, now as near  
As when you poured the Vedas' holy writ,  
The heart of India, in our hearts and knit  
Our souls with your high vision, calm and clear:—  
Godlike and gracious, you seem standing here  
In ochre robe and turbaned head. We sit  
In your majestic presence where is lit  
The starry fire that swings celestial spheres;  
Through India's length and breadth you trod,  
A princely mendicant from Orient  
To our religious parliament you came  
Where hearts swept up to you like flame;  
With tolerance, deep love, and logic blent,  
You taught that all religions lead to God.

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## WHEN THE SOUL HUNGERS FOR GOD

'Gentle Uddhava', said Sri Krishna, 'go to Vrindaban and inquire about the well-being of my foster-parents. Give them news of me and remove the misery from the hearts of the maidens grieving because I have seemingly left them. They meditate on me and will attain to me; but meanwhile they have forgotten that there is no separation between them and me, and are going about distracted, yearning for my presence'.

Uddhava followed the instructions of his Lord. Entering the golden chariot that was provided for him, he repaired to Vrindaban, reaching it at dusk when the cows were just returning to the village. The dust raised by their hoofs and the dim light prevented the villagers from seeing Uddhava's arrival. He heard cowherd youths and maidens rhythmically chanting the glories of Sri Krishna. The fragrance of incense, the aftermath of evening worship, floated gently in the air.

Uddhava went straight to the dwelling of Nanda, the cowherd chieftain and Sri Krishna's foster-father, who came forward in great joy to meet his princely guest and to offer the customary salutations and services. When Uddhava had been made quite comfortable, Nanda could no longer repress his eagerness for news of Sri Krishna. He cried, 'O great one, is my dear foster-son well? Is he surrounded by friends and loved ones? Does he remember his foster-parents? Does he remember his friends—the cowherd boys and maidens—to whom he is the All? Will he come again to Vrindaban? Everything we do reminds us so vividly of him that our minds are continually absorbed in him'.

Tears rolled down Nanda's cheeks and those of his wife Yashoda, at the recollection of the beloved Krishna. Uddhava was deeply touched by this evidence of attachment to his Lord. Saluting Nanda and Yashoda, he said: "O worthy souls, your devotion will lead you

to the Highest, since its object is the Preceptor of the universe. Know that Krishna is the cause of all, permeating all existence, guiding everything. High-minded ones, because of your adoration of him you have fulfilled the requirements for breaking the fetters of Karma, attaining to purity of heart, and becoming endowed with true knowledge. Krishna will be near you always. Even now he resides within you, as fire in the heart of wood'.

Nanda, Yashoda and their guest spent the entire night discussing the glory and wonder of Sri Krishna. Uddhava said: 'He is the Lord, utterly impartial in bestowing his love. He is the same to all—good, bad, and indifferent—for all are the same to him. He has neither father, mother, wife nor children. Action does not belong to him, because all his activities are but sport when he incarnates on the earth. Though beyond all qualities, he can assume the qualities of goodness, darkness, or ignorance. Though unborn, he can, with the assumption and use of these qualities, create, preserve, and destroy the universe. Remember this, that the Divine One is not only son to you and Yashoda, but he is also father, mother, friend, master, Soul of your soul—and he is all this to everyone. He is Ishvara; he is the past, the present, and the future; he is all things, great or small; he is whatever is seen or heard; he is the Great Soul, the Lord of all hearts'.

Dawn came and the sun cast lustrous rays upon the milkmaids, accentuating their loveliness and the beauty of their ornaments as they sang songs addressed to Sri Krishna and contemplated on him while performing their morning duties. By the light of the day Uddhava could see clearly how beautifully Vrindaban was set amid forests and fields abounding in delicately coloured, fragrant flowers. Birds lifted their voices, adding sweetness to the air. Soon the folk of Vrindaban saw the golden



chariot at the gate of the village, and the cry arose, 'Whose car is this? Can it be a messenger from our Krishna?'

After his morning meditation, Uddhava approached the milkmaids. When they saw his golden dress and ornaments, his eyes of lotus shape and his glowing countenance, they were reminded of Sri Krishna and asked among themselves, 'Who is he?' and 'Whence has he come?' Then they greeted him with humility and sweetness, speaking shyly and making him welcome. After he had been seated and they had learnt who he was, they said: 'It is only natural that our beloved Krishna should send you to bear greetings to his foster-parents and to inquire for their welfare, because even the great retain a certain interest in their relatives. When Krishna lived here he was interested in us also, but now that he has gone away, what reason is there for thinking that he continues to care for us, that we are still dear to him? The bird leaves the tree which bears no fruit; the deer leaves the burnt forest'.

They would not allow themselves, even for a moment, to hope that Sri Krishna remembered them as well as Nanda and Yashoda, and yet the thought of being forgotten hurt them cruelly, and they wept. But so absorbed did they become in talking about Sri Krishna, that they soon forgot themselves and their pain and before long were weeping for joy as they told Uddhava the wonders of the Holy One's boyhood.

Uddhava, realizing from their speech that these simple maidens had never recognized Sri Krishna as God, but had nevertheless responded with all their hearts to his Divine attraction and were utterly devoted to him, saluted them and said: 'Never forget that you are blessed and worthy to be worshipped by all the world because you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord. Such devotion as yours is acquired only through control of the senses. Those who merely bestow gifts and study the Vedas, find it difficult to attain this. Even when ascetics practise austerities with great earnestness for many years, they achieve

it with difficulty: Yet, in renouncing your human ties and electing to adore the Divine Soul, Sri Krishna, you have won His indescribable good fortune. Listen, O good and gentle maidens, to the words of the Lord. He once spoke them to you himself, but they have recently been imparted to me that I might confide them to you and so remind you of the Lord's secret message to his beloved devotees'.

The milkmaids forgot their shyness and drew closer to Uddhava. With deep conviction of the truth of the words he spoke, he gave them Sri Krishna's message: 'There is no separation between us, for I am the Soul of all. In every element of creation, mobile and immobile—in ether, fire, water, and earth—I am to be found. Likewise I am in the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the vital breath. What if I am removed from your sense perception? Such removal is only for the purpose of causing you to put forth more effort as you meditate on me, so that you will draw closer to me. A woman by her nature is drawn closer to her beloved when he is at a distance. Dear ones, remove all grief from your hearts and take your minds from sense objects. Dwell on me alone, your Lord Sri Krishna. Then you will find me in the heart of your hearts'.

Hearing this message, the milkmaids put aside their grief and offered worship to Uddhava for the treasure of his consolation. That worthy messenger of the Highest found in this way that these village maidens, though unaware of the Divinity of their Lord, had, through the very intensity of their love for him, attained to a high state of spiritual awareness.

Uddhava spent many months in happy association with the villagers of Vrindaban, who were continuously joyous in the recollection of the Lord. At last, having noted their sustained delight, he felt his mission had been fulfilled. So he made special obeisance to the cherished ones whose unflinching devotion to



the Lord Incarnate commanded his reverence, and he then sought Nanda, asking that his chariot be made ready.

The villagers crowded round his golden car, their hands filled with gifts. As spokesman, Nanda said: 'May our minds always dwell with yearning at the lotus feet of Sri

Krishna! May our tongues for ever be engaged in hymning his name, and our bodies in saluting him! Whatever be our condition as the result of our Karma and His will, may our lives be His alone, may our gifts be for Him only and please Him only, and may we gain His blessings!'

## THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

BY THE EDITOR

'Freedom in all matters, i.e. advance towards Mukti, is the worthiest gain of man. To advance oneself towards Freedom—physical, mental, and spiritual, and help others to do so, is the supreme prize of man'.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

In a world bewildered by ceaseless preparations for war and impotent plans for peace, everyone is confronted today more than ever with the basic conflicts of life, viz. between man and Nature, between man and man, and between man and himself. No sooner the dust has begun to settle on one battle-field than clouds of dust are raised on the next. Wars fought to end war have been on the increase, obviously disproving the contention that everlasting freedom could be achieved by meeting force by deterrent counter-force and violence by deterrent counter-violence. Notwithstanding the immense benefits conferred by the growth of the arts and the sciences, the general threat to life and property through wars and rumours of wars has shown no signs of abatement. In scrupulous fairness to the political leaders of nations, who repeatedly reiterate the well-worn stereotype of the rights of man and the civil liberties of the individual, it has to be said that not a few of them are earnestly sincere in their effort to create a vastly better world. By helping the removal of mutual distrust among nations, they no doubt seek to prevent an explosion somehow, thereby lessening the daily dread of radioactive disintegra-

tion of our cherished civilization. Though these lovers and leaders of mankind in every land speak with dissimilar voices, they all reveal their deep concern for the welfare of the common man and the betterment of his lot. They look forward to and show promise of, each in his own way, the 'golden age' of peace and plenty, when 'nation shall no more lift sword against nation' and there shall be enough and to spare of everything that man needs.

But what of Freedom itself? And where and when are we to expect the birth of the new world order based on justice, equality, and brotherly love in which the free development of each will lead to the free development of all? The goal is one, but the roads are many; consequently the starting points too are many. To most people the meaning of freedom has a pragmatic and utilitarian significance. By freedom they understand some form of self-government and political independence under the benign rule of which they may live happy, comfortable, and unoppressed. Many others look upon freedom as the state of social stability and order wherein the individual is free to exercise his inalienable rights



and privileges, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Not a few hold that freedom should confer on every citizen complete liberty of thought, action, and expression within the bounds of law and order. Nowhere has it ever been conceded that freedom ought to mean unlicensed and unrestrained exercise of right or authority by the individual or the State. For, without the restraining influence of reasonable discipline and just law, civilized and orderly life would yield place to chaos. In fact, national self-government, by which we moderners set great store, is no other than individual self-government, attained through self-restraint and self-rule. As such, the liberty of the individual citizen is a sacred heritage and every government or State that has the welfare of the people at heart has to preserve and protect this heritage of individual freedom, from which alone it derives the sanction of its authority and suzerainty. Hence the demand everywhere for ensuring the greatest possible scope for the development of the individual's personality by affording him equal opportunities with all to pursue any useful course to the best of his powers and abilities.

The meaning of real freedom, however, appears to be less obvious to man than the meaning of its opposites, viz. slavery, tyranny, and exploitation. Man seems to want freedom for himself in order to rob others of their freedom. The story of man from the dawn of civilization has been one of continuous striving for freedom—freedom from want and from fear, freedom from exploitation and oppression. To be more free is the goal of all human effort; freedom, not bondage, is the watchword of every nation, big or small. As early as in 1776, Thomas Paine wrote:

'O! Ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. . . . O! Receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind'.

The clarion call for ending the unjust exploitation of the weak by the strong, of the

poor by the rich, has gone forth from every corner of the earth from the most ancient times. As the centuries rolled by, the call grew louder and more persistent, while, simultaneously, exploitation and oppression also increased. Every road leading to the ideal state of blissful emancipation tended to become blocked—not by obstacles placed by any non-human agency, but by the sheer folly of human minds that had allowed themselves to be saturated with fear, hatred, intolerance, and lust for power. Even a cursory glance at world conditions in recent decades will suffice to impress on one's mind the odious but inescapable conclusion that the lofty meaning of freedom has lost its supremacy and assumed a deplorably narrow and bigoted significance.

The strength and power of a nation or State depend largely on the innate strength and power of the individuals, who more or less determine the shape and organization of their government. The individuals, in return for the rights, privileges, and security that the State offers them, have to fulfil conscientiously their obligations and responsibilities. Freedom is the will to be responsible for oneself; it is judicious exercise of the right to seek work, wealth, and happiness in the manner most appropriate to oneself, without transgressing the law or hindering the freedom of others. Enlightened citizens, who understand the meaning of freedom and utilize their freedom with much circumspection and with benefit to themselves and to others, can alone elect a government which may be said to be the best, as it is called upon to govern the least. A perfect society that can regulate its own affairs and govern itself has the least occasion for an authoritarian or militaristic type of government. Hence is it often said that self-government is better than the best form of good government. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'Government over self is the truest Swaraj, it is synonymous with Moksha or salvation'. According to Vedanta, the true meaning of freedom signifies supreme self-mastery (*svarājya-siddhi*) and self-fulfilment, attainable by everyone who frees himself from



the limitations of the body and mind and remains firmly established in the Infinite and the Imperishable.

None can deny that freedom is the most essential condition of all progress. Where there is no freedom—political, social, and spiritual, there can hardly be full growth and well-being of the human personality. Many a modern State, while granting complete political and economic emancipation to the people, seeks to curtail or deny social and even spiritual freedom. The physical needs of the body—food, shelter, and the largest amount of pleasure possible—have assumed a profoundly meaningful aspect to the majority of men today. The reason is obvious. At no time has the world been wanting in those who glorify the laws of the flesh and find 'freedom in the thousand bonds of delight'. Self-seeking mass orators, with deceptive slogans and insufficient factors of altruism, are surely the least fitted for meeting the demands of the present situation humanity finds itself in. The price one has to pay for achieving real and genuine freedom is much more than a mere revolutionary urge or a life of privation. It calls for infinite patience, simplicity, renunciation, and purity of motive. It may seem strange, but it is true, that the meaning of freedom can be properly understood only in relation to an abiding and deeply felt faith in the Divinity or Reality inherent in man.

Man has travelled a long way from the days of the robber-barons and the galley-slaves. The common labourer or artisan has become the focal point of universal attention. Freedom in the modern world has assumed a significance of unprecedented importance. There is no going back to the ancient conditions of life, however sensible and attractive, when the different peoples of the world remained in complete isolation, in many cases being unaware of even the existence of one another. Signs of great awakening, in support of regaining their national independence, are evident in every country that has been or still is under alien domination. For, no nation can live and thrive on being supplied the bare

necessaries of life alone. Even when a nation possesses wealth and material prosperity to any desired extent, it is seen that the soul of the nation remains unregenerate and the goal of a truly welfare State has not been achieved. Much of the clash and conflict that thwart the expansion of freedom and happiness is due to the unwisdom of regarding 'welfare' in terms of material wealth and military power only. Freedom from the tyranny of fear has eluded man for ages and today the position is no better, if not worse.

The war-weary world is aghast at the insincere ways of some of the vociferous protagonists of peace and freedom, who speak with their tongues in their cheeks, hiding the most lethal secret weapon in one hand and holding out the olive-branch in the other. A hectic race for the increase of armaments is occasionally interspersed with glib talks of freedom and feelers for peace, the implications of which even their ardent sponsors do not seem to be aware. Mutual rivalry and clash of self-interest have given rise to mutually repellent ideological superstructures and spheres of influence. Standing in the midst of mighty world movements, India finds herself in an unenviable position. The raging conflict of norms and ideologies is not unknown or non-existent in India. But, true to her great ideals and lofty aspirations, India has stood firm as the symbol of man's complete freedom from every shackle that binds the individual and contracts his infinite personality. She has preserved and proclaimed not only social, political, economic, and religious freedom, but also cultural and spiritual freedom, and that for everyone throughout the world, irrespective of any distinction based on birth, caste, race, religion, or nationality. Hence, let not her sons and daughters forget that India stands for the most exalted freedom—the Freedom of the soul of man. She has no less emphasized the mundane and more immediate aspect of freedom too, ensuring thereby, to all the people of the land, 'justice—social, economic, and political; liberty—of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality—of status and of



opportunity; and fraternity—assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation’.

It is no more a sign of progress to refuse to look back into the past than it is to refuse to look forward into the future. Every nation, like every individual, cherishes a distinctly characteristic conception of the ideal of freedom. The desire for freedom is universal and everyone puts forth his own blue-print of a new and more desirable world order, invariably buttressed by his stock of death-dealing weapons. But the meaning and conception of freedom that have developed in one land or among one group of people cannot obviously be acceptable or applicable to another. Each country has to adhere to the fundamentals of its own ancient cultural traditions and transform itself through fruitful integration of that which is best in the old as well as the new. In India spiritual ideals and values have ever held sway over secular, social, and all other values. The meaning of freedom cannot, therefore, be divested of its spiritual significance. The urge of the Spirit to break the bonds of the limited, narrow personality and rediscover itself in and through every other being constitutes the essence of human freedom which distinguishes man from the machine.

Where individual freedom is unhampered and the right of each individual to live the life of his choice is fully assured it is imperative that the sanctity of human personality should be realized and accorded due recognition. Freedom, as a Vedantin would view it, is nothing short of ultimate Freedom or Mukti, the transcendence from the world of limited freedom to the state of Infinite and Eternal Freedom. To be free in every respect one has to remain independent of the control of and subservience to anything other than the Self. ‘Man the brute’ has to loosen the bonds that tie him down to the myriads of passions and prejudices, sorrows and sufferings, and attain the blissful state of ‘Man the divine’, who not only enjoys the highest freedom for himself but also helps others to attain the same. Other

forms of freedom—political, social, and economic—are but phases of the fundamental spiritual freedom which forms as it were the thread of unity underlying and upholding them all. These phases of freedom are necessary means in man’s conscious attempt to actualize the latent indomitable urge of the divinity and perfection within him for expression and expansion.

Vedanta provides man with an ideal which ensures for him freedom that is eternal and imperishable and which imparts meaning and zest to life. It preaches the message of the emancipation of and sovereignty over self through a graduated scale of values and a regulated scheme of life, finally leading to the spiritual realization of the Supreme Reality. Hence the insistence on the individual’s strict observance of Dharma by the seers and social law-givers of India. A most outstanding feature of Indian civilization is its conception of Dharma as a measure of man’s freedom at home and in society. Though a word of protean significance, ‘The basic principle of Dharma’, says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, ‘is the realization of the dignity of the human Spirit which is the dwelling-place of the Supreme’. It would be a misuse of freedom for the individual to transgress the injunctions and prohibitions of Dharma. Further, duty determined by one’s natural bent, capacity, and condition of life is one’s Sva-dharma (one’s own mode of being or code of life), which gives one the full freedom to mould one’s destiny in accordance with one’s nature, temperament, and environment. Sva-dharma makes each man great in his own place and promotes individual and social welfare through regulated norms of liberty to pursue the path of spiritual unfoldment and secular well-being. Sva-dharma confers on man the freedom to call forth the best in him by preparing him for the social function for which he is naturally endowed.

That Dharma (equal justice and freedom for all in the eye of the law) is an integral part of and a necessary guiding force in shaping the freedom of individuals and groups



is beautifully depicted in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, where we read:

In the beginning this (the Kshatriya and other castes) was indeed Brahman, one only. Being one, He did not flourish. So He projected the Kshatriya. Yet He did not flourish. So He projected the Vaishya. He did not still flourish. So He projected the Shudra caste. Yet He did not flourish. Then He projected that excellent form—Dharma (righteousness). This Dharma is the controller of the Kshatriya. Therefore there is nothing higher than that. So even a weak man hopes to defeat a stronger man through Dharma.

Thus the Upanishads address themselves to the discovery of Freedom Eternal by providing man with the spiritual pabulum needed to appease his nameless and perennial hunger for Liberation (Moksha). Freedom is the ground and freedom is the goal of all life according to Vedanta, which summons men and women fearlessly to undertake the mighty adventure of the Spirit and boldly to accomplish the transcendence of the limitations of finitude. A truer understanding and a more intense practice of Dharma, in its relation to the meaning of freedom, is the great need for the present-day world. Even when the accredited administrators and custodians of law and order fail to come up to his expectations, the individual citizen, scrupulously following the path of Dharma and aiming at the state of supreme spiritual freedom, acts as a potent, stabilizing force in society, dauntlessly striving for the freedom, security, and happiness of all.

Does not freedom connote the liberty of a people to maintain armies, stockpile arma-

ments, and wage wars in support of any cause dear to them? Perhaps it does, in a very limited sense. The freedom to create and to construct may, at the same time, confer, but never condone, the freedom to subjugate and annihilate. No sane and intelligent man desires the freedom of a wild horse or a roving bull. Nor would the least intellectually gifted person voluntarily submit to tyranny. Without tasting freedom man can never get rid of cowardice and fanatical intolerance.

The meaning of freedom has both a social and a trans-social significance; it has both a national and an international application. If freedom for every living human being has got to be ensured, the prevention of war and the elimination of distrust through a single world government is indispensable. Yet, that is not all. The individuals that compose that world government have got to be men of spiritual vision and moral integrity; or else, unsubdued selfishness and greed are bound to get the better of them and wreck their joint efforts for world understanding. The prevailing gloom in this or that part of the world need not dishearten, much less discourage, the lovers of real freedom and peace. Sri Krishna, who gave to humanity, through the *Gita*, the greatest charter of freedom—unequivocally enunciating the meaning of its secular and spiritual aspects, declares that the faithful discharge of individual duties and obligations (Sva-dharma) paves the way for the realization of the highest universal Dharma, embodying the material, moral, and spiritual freedom of mankind.

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“The Lord through His eternal Power created various abodes such as trees, reptiles, and beasts, birds, insects, and fish, but was not satisfied in His heart with these. Then He made the human body which is endowed with the desire to realize Brahman (the Supreme Reality), and He was delighted.

The wise man having after many births obtained this extremely rare human body, which though frail is yet conducive to man's supreme welfare, should quickly strive for Liberation, before the body, which is always subject to death, chances to fall; for sense-enjoyment is obtainable in any body.”

—*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY GORDON W. ALLPORT

Ramakrishna was born over a century ago, but his profound influence, like that of other great and holy personalities, has grown rather than waned. Each of us, I presume, feels indebted to the teaching and example of Sri Ramakrishna, each of us in his own way. I, for my part, think of three lessons that I have learned from him. I am certain that each of us, from our own experience, could add to the list.

The first lesson I shall mention brings to mind the lenten season. We recall how Christ withdrew into silence for forty days to prepare for his life-work. The Christian Church reminds us that we too should grow silent and increase our meditations in order better to meet the problems of life. But few Christians really observe lent. If they do so, it is often in a negative way: by giving up candy or tobacco, and not by true mental discipline.

The West is notoriously noisy. We chatter and jabber nearly all the time. It comes hard for us to close our mouths and fix our minds on our goals and purposes, and attain what Ramakrishna so successfully sought: a God-consciousness. Perhaps the Quakers have learned the lesson; and also those who genuinely practice retreats.

But, for the most part, it is to the East, especially to India, and to holy personalities like Ramakrishna, that we have to look for example and guidance in this matter. The West is almost totally lacking in knowledge of the techniques of silence, of meditation, of concentration, and orison prayer. There is much we can learn from Hinduism about these matters.

Think of the revolution that might occur in the community, industrial, national, and international life of the West if we dared to introduce considered silence. Here is a tense,

strained labour-management meeting; there a quarrelsome board or committee meeting; here a tense and strained international conference. What would happen if we dared introduce at hot and bitter moments a period of silence? The momentary tension would be broken, people could then ask themselves whether they are following their own best insights; they could then survey the 'problem on the whole' and become oriented to their true purposes and goals. Actually no one seems to dare propose so revolutionary, and salutary, a step.

Once, at a student conference, a learned speaker mentioned the logic of silence and meditation. Then he asked the students if they would try a period. Reluctantly they said they would, if it were not too long and if they could have music. So he agreed to the modified arrangement, and music was played while the group sat silently. Afterwards he asked the students to report on their experience. They said: 'It was all right, but it was too long a period of silence'. He had timed the interval and it was just two minutes! Yes, we need to learn how to be silent, and how to use our silence in effective meditation.

Ramakrishna was fond of a song and of a figure of speech that likened human life to oarsmen who embarked on a choppy sea. The oarsmen, representing the senses, all pulled in different directions, while the waves chopped and churned. All this confusion and counter-movement existed because the oarsmen did not pause to find out where the fresh breeze was blowing or where the deeper currents of life were leading. One has to pause, take stock, and go with the guiding movement of life—not against it.

A second lesson for me lies in Ramakrishna's catholicity of mind and sympathy. He is well known for his study and practice of



all the great religions. He entered understandingly into the Christian frame of mind, into the Mohammedan, into the Buddhist. He utilized their techniques of worship and thought their thoughts. By *all* roads he found he could attain inner peace and God-consciousness.

Most of us have trouble enough mastering one religion. We do it only partially and inadequately. Hence we reverence a holy personality who can demonstrate completely to himself what human brotherhood means. There would be no racial or religious prejudice if each of us had, even in a small degree, the capacity to live sympathetically in the way of existence found helpful and uplifting by other groups. If we did so we could not possibly hate them. We could not be ignorant of their essential humanity. And we would have a truer sense that all nations are of one blood and one aspiration. Granted that we cannot equal the great breadth of Ramakrishna's experience, we can try to the best of our individual ability to stretch our minds and enter sympathetically into the way of life of other people—even if at first they seem strange or misguided to us.

Finally, we can learn that not only do all nations and religions seek the same salvation, the same high goals in their own way, but that each individual does so likewise. I may be

mistaken but I believe that no religion respects the individuality of men in their religious quest more than does the Vedic religion. I have learned from Ramakrishna how many and varied are the aspects of God to which human beings may turn. Our individual needs differ, our comprehensions differ, our values have different aspects. As individuals then we must approach religious truth in varied ways. True devotions are personalized; each devotee has his own most suitable approach. No man can be arrogant enough to claim that his doxy is the only orthodoxy possible.

We learn from the life and example of Ramakrishna the sensitivity that we may develop, if we will, for each other's mode of living. We can, with goodwill, gain new compassion, not only for other races and nations, but for our neighbour who sits next to us. We may not prescribe, we may not dictate, we may not ridicule. Rather we can and should join sympathetically with him in his quest for truth and for the beatific vision.

None of these lessons, of course, are absent from Christianity or from any of the other forms of the great religions of the earth. But true to the essence of Vedanta, one form brings forth one truth more clearly than others. And it is especially these three lessons that seem outstanding to me in the life and example of Sri Ramakrishna.

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## THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

That the proper study for man is man himself, one is apt to forget in a world which is over-weighted on the side of matter in its myriad forms. Matter seems to be too much with us, not so much in its obvious grosser modes as in insidious subtler ways. Having discovered the expanding universe, modern man has almost lost his soul. And having set

up wonder-machines to do his bidding, he has become their slave. He sweeps the starry skies with his powerful instruments of perception; he goes round the globe in fast-moving vehicles; he fathoms the depths of the seas, and descends into the bowels of the earth. What used to be regarded in earlier ages as supernormal powers have become normal to



him. He has learnt to split the atom and use it as a demon of destruction; he can now marshal the elements to conduct warfare for him. He has also learnt to extract from nature mysteries that make him live in comfort, live long and live in healthy surroundings. Though the blessings of science and technology are at present available only to a few, theoretically everyone can enjoy them. And, the outer comforts of the average man are probably much greater now than ever before in human history. Yet man is not happy; he is at war with himself. By a sort of escape-mechanism, he tries to run away from himself. Being afraid of his own self, he runs after the external world and there finds his own shadows assuming hideous and awful shapes. Thus he seems to live a nightmarish existence, not knowing that it is so. It is reported that once, when Socrates defined the task of philosophy as an attempt to understand man, a visiting Indian sage remarked, 'How is one to understand human nature without understanding divine nature?' The modern man in his preoccupation with process and change scarcely rises even to the humanistic level as provided by the Socratic definition of the dictum 'Know thyself'.

It is true that the life-sciences that are studied in our schools and colleges attempt to give us an account of man. But that account, unfortunately, is that of an exterior view of man, and not of an interior or intimate view. A strange paradox in our academic world today is that while the objective sciences like physics show signs of a return to metaphysics, the life-sciences like biology and psychology, adopting outmoded mechanistic methods, are breaking away from metaphysics. Man is now presented as nothing more than a network of physical and physiological forces. One science is interested in tracing the descent of man from primitive forms of life. Another dismisses not only soul but also mind and consciousness; and makes of man a stimulus-response mechanism or a bundle of conditioned reflexes. One of the new schools of philosophy preaches that there is no genuine occu-

pation that can be said to belong to philosophy in the scheme of things. The so-called philosophical problems are pseudo-problems; on logical analysis they can be shown to be nonsensical. There is nothing such as soul because empirical science can give no evidence for its existence. Another school of philosophy treats of man existentially as a unique entity. Man is not a creature of natural forces, nor an element in a cosmic Spirit. His nature eludes cold intellectual analysis. He has to be encountered in a crisis, in the experience of dread and anxiety, horror and despair.

Certain political doctrines have made capital out of partial and inadequate views of man. The results of the analytical studies of human nature have been employed to make of man little more than an automaton. It used to be said of Absolute Idealism that, according to its theory, man should be compelled to be free. It is the reverse of this that is true, according to some contemporary political doctrines, viz. that man should be made to imagine himself free to get bound. The one fundamental question before us is whether man should be treated as a mere means or be regarded as an intrinsic end. The answer to this question can only come from that to another, viz. what is man? If man be nothing more than a piece of matter or an epiphenomenon, he is meant to be *used*. It is only if man be essentially Spirit that it is wrong to use him as a mere means. When we say that man is Spirit, it should not be supposed that he is Spirit as opposed to matter, that Spirit is the thesis of which matter is the antithesis. All such dualisms, it should be remembered, are initial and not final. The true view of Spirit is that it is the whole or reality of which matter is a fragment or appearance. The Spirit that is man, again, should not be identified with a segment of mental life such as the intellect, the will, or the emotions. In the words of the Upanishads, the Spirit is *satya*, *jñāna*, *ānanda*, existence-intelligence-bliss. It is in this sense that Spirit is the final value, the ultimate goal.

*Puruṣān-na param kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā*



*parāgatih*—‘There is nothing higher than Spirit; it is the final limit, the supreme end .

Any system of education, if it is to serve its purpose, must be based on a sound philosophy of man. Man is perfectible because he is educable. Perfection is the end; education is the means. Man can be educated because his is not a mere hand-to-mouth existence; nor is the pocket-view of life his final or ultimate view. For a time he may seem to be satisfied with values that are temporal. But eventually he discovers that nothing short of eternal life can be his goal. The purpose of education, then, should be to enable him to discover his true Self, to remove the obstacles that stand between him and perfection. The function of education should be not merely to *impart* information but to *draw out* what is best in man.

A major flaw in our present education is that it contributes very little to the flowering of an integrated personality. Learning a number of subjects with an eye on passing an examination is almost the whole of education as we know it. Professor Christie, one of the delegates to the UNESCO Symposium on ‘The Concept of Man’ held at New Delhi in December 1951, made the following significant remark which we in India should deeply ponder over. ‘Is it true’, he asked, ‘that Indian universities are at the mercy of examinations even more than our own universities, and do not take as their ideal knowledge for its own sake? I am sure that we in England suffer from the temptation to regard our universities as means to an end, “degree-getting machines”. . . . If the East has copied this side of Western education, I am afraid it has copied the worst’. We in India have magnified the examinations out of all proportions. There should certainly be objective tests for grading pupils and for guiding their progress in education. But there is not much to be said in favour of a system which makes the students stuff their brains with ill-assorted bits of information to be reproduced at the time of examinations and to be forgotten thereafter.

The craze for science courses in our universities is another deplorable feature copied from the West. But even in the West the pursuit of science is not so indiscriminate, unplanned, and profitless as in India. Basic knowledge of general science should certainly be a required subject for all students both at the High School and Collegiate levels. There is no denying the fact that science is one of the greatest achievements of man, and that, in its applied form, it has become a powerful force to reckon with in the modern world. But that does not warrant the overcrowding of the science lecture-halls and laboratories with pupils for the majority of whom in later life it will not make any difference whether they are graduates in science or in arts.

There is also another danger. A purely utilitarian view of education, to which is due in a large measure the present popularity of subjects like science and economics, is not a healthy or desirable view. The object of education is not to produce mere technicians and wage-earners. There is a higher purpose which education should never lose sight of. It is to make man perfect, ‘to show him’, in the words of Sir Richard Livingstone, ‘the spiritual ideals without which neither happiness nor success are genuine or permanent, to produce beings who will know not merely how to split atoms but how to use their power for good’.

While there should be a legitimate place for physical and social sciences in any scheme of education, the classics and the humanities should not be neglected and starved on the plea that there is no demand for them. The basis of education is not simply that of supply and demand. An essential aim of education should be to create in the minds of people the right sort of demand. We rise or perish by our desires. It is by the right type of desire that we can rise. A sound educational policy should be to encourage the study of classics and humanities, for it is through them that one ordinarily gets the vision of greatness and beauty, of truth and goodness.

A wrong approach to the classics, however, may, instead of broadening the mind,



make it narrow and parochial—a danger from which scientific studies are almost free. It is only recently that some States have quarrelled as to where and by whom this or that was first discovered or invented. But generally speaking, science is universal. As regards the classics and subjects like history and geography, a narrow outlook on the part of the teacher or student will defeat the very purpose of education. The attitude of 'my country, right or wrong' ill accords with the spirit of culture. If one has learned to enjoy Kamban or Kālidāsa in the proper way, he will surely find exquisite beauty in the works of Shakespeare and Goethe. A true historian or geographer will not magnify the greatness of his own country at the expense of others. Fortunately, there is widespread recognition today that the function of history is not to stop with recording the succession of kings and their exploits. There are factors of co-operation and concord in the histories of the different peoples which should be stressed and not overlooked. The future historian should approach his subject from a world perspective. Narrow nationalism is an anachronism in our day. If only in studying history we emphasize the common concern of life, the emergence of ideas that have conferred benefits on all alike, the pursuit of values by individuals and groups, etc., we shall be paving the way for the removal of social tensions. Similarly in geography we must cultivate a global outlook. To regard one's own country as the centre of the world is meaningless and mischievous. Every geographical unit has its own excellences and drawbacks. Every country has its own dark and bright spots. The object of education should be to make men conscious of the unity of the world. It is true that every citizen should be proud of his country and its traditions. But at the same time he should realize that he is also a world citizen, that life is fundamentally one, and that there is basic unity in apparent diversity.

The tragedy of our world is that many of

its people, though educated, lack a sense of purpose in life. They seem to ask, 'What is the point of living? What are we here for, and how can it have any purpose?', without expecting an answer either from themselves or from others. This is due to the fact that our educational objectives have been limited and narrow. The fundamental reform in education, then, should go to the roots. As Aristotle said, 'We should not listen to those who tell us that human beings should think like men and mortals think like mortals, but should achieve such immortality as we may, and strain every nerve to live by the highest things in us. They may be small in substance, but in price and power they are far beyond all else'.

If the gaining of immortality, or, in other words, the realization of eternal values, be the end of education, education cannot end with formal schooling. It is, in fact, a gradual and lifelong process. As a Sanskrit verse puts it:

*Ācāryāt pādam ādatte, pādam śiṣyah  
sva-medhayā;  
Pādam sa brahmacāribhyah, pādam  
kāla-kramena tu.*

'From the teacher a part of education the student receives; another part he gets by the exercise of his own intelligence; a third part he gathers from his fellow-pupils; and a fourth in due course of time.' It is now well recognized in educational theory and practice that the education of the child has to start not after he reaches a certain age but very early in his life. The excellence of the residential system is also admitted. The need for refresher courses for adults is increasingly felt in educational circles. What is now required is the planning of universal education on the basis of fundamental principles, as also the will to execute the plan. Especially in our country, education should receive top priority. It is through education of the right sort that our people can regain their greatness and also achieve progress. There is nothing good or great which education cannot give.



# VEDANTA PHENOMENOLOGY

BY PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

(Continued from the July issue)

## III. THE WAKEFUL AWARENESS AND ITS EXPLANATION FROM A HIGHER AWARENESS

We now proceed to the next higher grade of awareness, the wakeful one. This gives the so-called 'real' world at its objective pole and the wakeful ego at its subjective pole. This awareness is ordinarily taken as the absolute and the world as *the* real one. So the pleasurable and painful objects appear as absolutely so. Yet this is not wholly true even for ordinary minds. There comes an intuition of the worldly objects with their emotional effects as somehow essentially delightful. The world appears as an imaginative creation, as an aesthetic object. This means some transcendental awareness is caught hold of even in the midst of our worldly awareness and it works from behind the scenes just as the latter does with respect to dreams and imagination. A little self-disciplining and philosophical introspection make this higher order awareness more apparent and the wakeful awareness as imaginary. The qualities and the relations, that is, sense-intuitions and the forms that make up the phenomenal world, appear as not necessary or compulsive. An object known implies an awareness of it as existent, but there is also an awareness that the object might not as well exist. Existence implies non-existence, a thing coming out of nothing in a very real sense. Thus it is that nothingness or *śūnyatā* is regarded in Mādhyamika and Zen Buddhism as the source of all things and the basis of spontaneity. 'Everything comes from nothing; seeing from non-seeing, the conscious from the unconscious', says a Zen master. 'All things in the world come from existence and existence comes from non-existence', says Lao-Tsze (*Tao Te Ching*, XL).

'The sages who searched their hearts' thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent' (*R̥g-Veda, Nāsadiya Sūkta*). The relation of logical implication or logical togetherness of things and nothingness is recognized in the Mādhyamika and Zen philosophy, but what is known as *samsāra* is the same as *nirvāṇa*. 'The soul as birth and death (*samsāra*) comes forth from the Tathāgata's womb. But the immortal (suchness) and the mortal (birth and death) coincide with each other. Though they are not identical they are not a duality. It is called *ālayavijñāna*', writes Ashvaghosha in his *Awakening of Faith*.

Now what is important to note is that it is not nothingness that produces things, but *awareness* of nothingness that does so. This removes the apparent self-contradiction from the statement 'Everything comes from nothing', and gives sense to the interpretation of *śūnyatā* (as made by many modern philosophers, e.g. D. T. Suzuki) as something affirmative and not purely nihilistic. Awareness of nothingness produces awareness of things and the latter implies the former. As shown before, pure naught is a meaningless term; there is but awareness of non-existent things. This awareness means awareness of 'objects in general' or pure object without any space-time determination (that is, without existence, existence being always determinate and particular). This awareness implies possibility of objects and, so, is the condition of (*awareness* of) actual objects. When awareness develops polarity and has one object to contemplate as a subject, there is the beginning of creation. Out of pure objectivity come particular objects. We will elucidate this point subsequently.



All this means that the wakeful awareness of the so-called real world is only a kind of dream-awareness and not absolute. Thus the world with its laws and categories is not anything apart from our awareness and this awareness is but a contingent modification of a higher awareness of non-existence and possibility of the world. This view of the world solves a great many puzzles and paradoxes which the schools of rationalism, realism, empirical or subjective idealism, and some varieties of absolute idealism generate by not recognizing (what Vedanta phenomenology does) awareness with its different grades as the foundational principle of metaphysics.

Thus it solves the riddle of the origin of the world. There cannot be found any material substance as the prime stuff of the world, for the question of the origin of this stuff has to be faced. Awareness of no-thing (and the *idea* of things it involves) being the cause of everything explains at once the origin of things and their infinite variety. It explains because it convinces us at first through our analogical experience in dreams and imagination (where objects appear out of nothing merely through our willing it), and then through our direct experience of the principle. For the principle is within us all the time: 'That Thou art'. It requires only a little withdrawal of the mind from its naive and habitual objective attitude to the inner regions where the implications of the sense-objects reside. Philosophical enquiry, particularly of the phenomenological research type, illustrated by our Yoga and Vedanta disciplines, leads one to grasp the inner principles and explicates what operates implicitly.

The question of the origin of the world cannot be solved by the realists. Matter *out there* as an ultimate given is never a satisfactory solution. It cannot, for instance, explain our knowledge of it and our error. The empirical idealists, like Berkeley and the Vijñānavādins, rightly reject the material substance, but since they reject the external or public world also, they create many problems without solving them satisfactorily. The

external world is self-evidentially given and to reject it in the bald way (without a philosophy of levels of awareness) is very arbitrary and this leads to relativism and scepticism. Vedanta phenomenology recognizes awareness of objects as (perceptually) known and also as unknown and implied by the former awareness and made explicit with a little introspection. Rationalism explains the world from reason, but cannot solve the riddle produced by the dichotomies such as subject-object, substance-qualities, universal-particular, reason-sensation, unless it recognizes levels of awareness. Absolute and dialectical idealism come nearer to our philosophy, but make Being and non-Being or Becoming remote principles behind our experience. That they are already 'in us' waiting to be recognized and made self-aware, has to be perceived and so philosophy is to be a system of serious personal knowledge instead of a speculative theory.

The idea of the world as a sort of dream solves another metaphysical riddle, that connected with the origin of the world in time. If the world is regarded in a realistic and absolutist fashion, it is patent that we are landed in hopeless self-contradictions. If it appeared at a particular time, what was there before its appearance? If it is eternally here it passes one's understanding in the realistic attitude. The answer is that just as in a dream we can never find out the time when the dream started, so we can never find out the beginning of the world in world-time. This time that we experience is created by the higher awareness for which all the events here are in an eternal now. That which creates time out of its free will cannot itself be temporal. The starting of the dream can be known only in the wakeful awareness and the time of starting can be marked in the world-time, for to mark the starting we have to be aware of the state immediately preceding it. The dream-time is within the world-time and the latter within the timeless now of the awareness of non-existence and possibility. There may, however, be many *scales* of world-time



correlated to physical environment and psychological conditions of the person aware of the world, but there are only three *orders* of time, viz. the dream-time, the world-time of wakeful awareness, and the timeless now of the awareness of non-existence and possibility. From this examination of orders of time we find that the beginning of the world cannot itself be timed. Aristotle also held this view and he showed that the starting of change cannot be marked; we note a change when it has already taken place. This means that in terms of our own time, the beginning of the world cannot be known to have occurred and, so, the world may be held as beginningless. But it cannot be said to be endless, for the awareness of the world may be transcended any time, in the sense that its necessity or objectivity may appear as illusory in the light of a new awareness, viz. that of non-existence and possibility. Thus it is that Shankara held *māyā* to be beginningless though not endless. And since *māyā* (the wakeful awareness of the world) exists, yet is not inevitable, but like a dream or an illusory object is capable of being cancelled or sublated, that is, since it exists and so is not wholly unreal, yet is not ultimately real, it is said to be indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). The rather paradoxical statements of Shankara regarding the nature of the world of wakeful awareness may be better understood in the light of levels of awareness as suggested here.

The enigmatic problems of the prime stuff and of the beginning of the world are thus solved by our phenomenological enquiry. The third problem is that of the finitude and infinitude of the world. This may be settled if we recognize that there is no world apart from our awareness of it both as perceived and as not perceived. (I am aware of objects existing though not perceived. This awareness of objects as unperceived is the implication of awareness of objects as perceived. When I perceive an object I am aware of the object as not created by the perceptual activity, but existing independently). The world can be infinitely extended or divisible if

this awareness be infinitely extended in time. Since there is always the possibility of this awareness being transcended, the world cannot be said to be infinite; but as within this awareness we can never come to a limit in extension or division of the world, the world is boundless. Thus the paradoxical statement that the world is boundless though not infinite may be made. It may be understood through its analogy with the dream-situation. In a dream we can never come to a limit while exploring the dream-land or while dividing any dream-object, for we shall be always, without our knowing it, producing some object in dream-awareness. Yet the dream-awareness may be transcended and so the apparent infinity of extension or division may prove illusory. The same holds with regard to the world of wakeful awareness; we can never come to an end of the world or of dividing a body, but we can end all this business of coming to the end. A task in a dream may be endless, but it ends as the dream itself ends.

The fourth and perhaps the most important problem to be faced is that of the form and content of our knowledge of the world. The forms (the logical principles and the ontological categories) appear as somehow 'in us' and mental, yet applying to the concrete reality given to the senses. The distinction between understanding and sensation and their unity has to be properly understood. The normal and naive wakeful awareness includes awareness of sense-objects and of abstract forms not as separate factors. There is no distinction here of the universal and the particular, the form and the content. Empirical knowledge or concrete experience is formed-content, the judgment 'S is P' being a concrete unity of terms and relations, with no problem of relation of terms with relations appearing at this level of unreflective awareness. But philosophical introspection separates the two factors in knowledge and poses the question of their union. Philosophical introspection is but a form of the higher awareness (viz. awareness of non-existence) that pro-



duces the empirical reality from behind the wakeful awareness; so, with this introspection, the more pervasive and essential characteristics of this empirical reality first become known as somehow not necessary and objective, but 'in us', that is, in the subject of the higher awareness with which the empirical self now begins to identify itself. The separation of the formal factors from the material ones takes place with the dawn of Self-consciousness, which shows that the objects are but projections thrown out by the higher awareness for the enjoying contemplation of the higher Self, though passively suffered as external necessities by the empirical self. The formal factors being the more pervasive ones are first to be objects of higher awareness and they are thus the *a priori* principles of objectivity. The logical law of identity or non-equivocalness, which is the foundation of the three laws of thought, and the ontological categories of space, time, causality, substance, quality, and quantity, which are essential *a priori* forms of all objects, become first apparent and distinct from the sense-data which they organize to yield the concrete reality. Philosophical introspection into wakeful awareness thus breaks it up into two parts and withdraws implicit belief from the formal part. This leaves empirical reality as a mechanical combination of the two parts with the pseudo-question, 'How they work together'? The answer to the question is that they work together because they are not really separable parts of a whole in wakeful awareness and when this awareness is partly disturbed by the awakening of the higher awareness (of nothingness that created it), they appear as parts and then they do *not* really work together, for there is already a withdrawal of the forms from the objective reality which is left as a meaningless blur of sense-data. Awareness of forms as 'in us' is a manifestation of the higher awareness and this leads to the awareness of the empirical world as an illusory one. This is the deeper implication of any form of critical philosophy such as Kant, for instance, offered us. The world of wakeful awareness appears as a

dream, a play of names and forms (*nāma-rūpa*) created and enjoyed by the higher Self, but taken as reality and suffered by the lower self (which is a self-willed mode of the higher Self). The first stage of awakening of Self-consciousness of the higher awareness makes us aware of the forms as not in the object and leaves the sensuous content, now a meaningless haze or rhapsody, in the field. This reduces the world to an illusion that is not over, but continuing, like a dream we sometimes have, one of which we are conscious, yet which is continuing. But a further transformation takes place as the higher awareness fully comes to its own. Then the sense-data too are found to be 'in us', that is, in the higher Self, which being aware of them as its own doing does not treat them as objective. This leads to the sublation of the sense-data just as the awareness of the dream as such leads eventually to its sublation. This awareness of the empirical world as a kind of dream is induced by philosophical introspection (of course of a meditative nature and not of a merely speculative sort) that persistently questions the objectivity of the objects given in awareness. It is also occasioned by the awareness of such phenomena as contradict the *a priori* forms or laws, e.g. the miracles connected with the lives and works of saints. In both the cases of waking up of the higher awareness, it is the same awareness working through the lower level from behind that is responsible. The dream is broken by a faint appearance of a questioning of the dream-reality and also by such events or situations in it as are grossly improbable. In both the cases it is after all the higher awareness (in the case of the dream it is the wakeful awareness) that is responsible. Thus it is understandable why it is said that it is Grace that is responsible for our enlightenment and salvation. 'The Self cannot be gained by the Vedas, nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. The Self chooses him as his own' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*). The Zen Buddhists believe in the cult of non-effort and sudden illumination (*satori*). 'If you search



for it (Reality), it goes farther from you', says a Zen Master. 'When the mind is ready for some reasons or other, a bird flies, or the bell rings, and you at once return to your original home; that is, you discover your now real Self', says the Zen philosopher D. T. Suzuki. *Dhyāna* (meditation), practised by the Zen monks, is merely a quieting exercise of the mind and not a search after something beyond. The transcendental operation of the higher awareness in the lower as described here is the basis of the general doctrine of the mystics that the lower self (the ego) has to be stilled in order to realize the higher Self, the subject of the higher awareness. 'The Lord dwells in the heart of all born, O Arjuna, and with magic (*māyā*) makes all born beings spin about as though set upon a whirligig (*Gita*, XVIII. 61).

#### IV. THE AWARENESS OF NON-EXISTENCE: ISHVARA AS ITS SUBJECT

The wakeful awareness is the awareness of existent things. The objective pole of this awareness is the empirical world of science and common sense and the subjective pole is the empirical self that takes the world as implicit real. The awareness higher in grade than this wakeful one is the awareness of non-existence and possibility, as said before. The subjective pole of this awareness is the higher Self for which there is nothing existing as actuality, but there is an indefinite object without any determination signifying possibility of objects to appear. This state may be directly experienced through pursuing in meditation (*yoga*) our ordinary experiences back to their origin, uncovering in the way layers of awareness veiling and modifying the higher ones. But this may also be roughly guessed through an analogy with a similar state in the lower plane of awareness. When one is just thinking of some indefinite object, just wishing any object to appear before one's imagination or memory, one experiences a similar situation. As the mind is turned objectward, there is an indefinite object or pure objectivity standing over against the mind. And then some particular object

appears. It may be a word, a scene, or a thing. Thus I may have words like horse, the moon, a murder scene, and as soon as I suggest to myself that I must have the objects signified by any word, the particular object appears answering to my demands. I demand and I get. The desire for something in general produces a thing in particular out of nothing which is thus not merely nothing but alive with possibility and spontaneity. 'And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light', says the Bible. 'Thereafter rose desire in the beginning, desire, the primal seed and germ of spirit (*Rg-Veda, Nāsadiya Sūkta*). The awareness of non-existent objects is the ground of the awareness of existent objects: the former awareness being of the object in general or the indefinite object and the latter of the objects in particular or existing things. The question how particular objects appear can never be solved if we confine ourselves to the empirical level and try to explain them in terms of existents and causal laws. We shall then be landing ourselves either in an infinite regress or in a *petitio principii*. We have to break the magic circle and recognize the higher level of awareness as the creator of the wakeful awareness and its object, the empirical reality. As has been said before, it is not nothing creating something, but awareness of nothing (in particular) producing awareness of something in particular.

Now this higher awareness of non-existence of objects is the awareness enjoyed in relation to Ishvara of Vedānta as a subject. The object of this awareness, the non-existence of objects, is pure objectivity that negates all particularity or existence. Existence is particular spatio-temporal occupation and awareness of non-existence is awareness of the object in general. This pure objectivity, negating all concrete objects or existence, is *māyā* and Ishvara is Brahman (awareness in itself) standing over against *māyā*. Ishvara thus takes all existence as illusory. This awareness of non-existence has two internal modes. In the one, its object is pure and actual non-existence, when there is a blank before it, the empirical



world having either not appeared as yet or disappeared. In the other mode its object is virtual non-existence, when there is the empirical world in the field, but it is through and through infected with and shot by non-existence in the sense that it is known as illusory and not taken for reality. These two states of awareness of non-existence are analogous to two states of empirical awareness, one in which the dream is not appearing (either sublated or to be appearing) and the other in which the dream is appearing but, the sleep having broken in part, it is taken as illusory and not mistaken for reality. Now Ishvara, the subject of this higher awareness of non-existence, has two modes of being corresponding to these two modes of awareness. Ishvara as contemplating pure objectivity and actual non-existence is one, and the other is for whom the world appears, yet which is known as illusory and created by Himself for His aesthetic enjoyment. In both these modes of godhood, Ishvara is *māyādhīśa*, the wielder of *māyā*, with the power to project and retract the phenomenal world. Again, this awareness of non-existence, pure or virtual, of the world is awareness of its essentially non-describable and enigmatic nature recognized by Mādhyamika Buddhism and denoted by *śūnyatā* (void). Awareness of pure non-existence is regarded as *śūnyatā* when it means 'nought' which is said to be the matrix of all things. Thus *śūnyatā* is a negation, yet an affirmation. Awareness of virtual non-existence of the empirical world, that is, awareness of it as illusory, as what appears, but is not real and abiding, is also called *śūnyatā*, but now meaning this indescribable and equivocal nature of the empirical reality. Thus *śūnyatā* is sometimes said to be the begetter of the empirical reality and sometimes as the characteristic nature of this reality.

One further point may be mentioned. Just as the empirical awareness is not wholly modified into the dream-awareness, but also remains transcendent in an unconscious state working from behind the dream and waking to consciousness any moment, to reveal the

dream-world as an illusory one, so is the case with the higher awareness of non-existence. In other words, Ishvara is transcendent besides being immanent, He is always there behind our wakeful awareness and He is awakened in us any moment when our empirical self lapses. The occasions we find in the empirical world to wake us up to the higher awareness, such as our philosophical, religious, ethical, or aesthetical disciplines or any strange accident such as a pathetic scene or a miracle, are all ultimately worked from behind by the transcendental Ishvara. As noted earlier, this is the intuitive basis of the doctrine of Grace in religious and mystical literature. The working of the unconscious higher awareness in the conscious from behind and then its waking up or becoming self-conscious is a well-known fact in modern depth psychology. 'The unconscious is an unglimpsable completeness of all subliminal psychic factors, a total exhibition of potential nature', writes the renowned psychologist C. G. Jung.

## V. THE HIGHEST AWARENESS: BRAHMAN

Ishvara is ever working in us unconsciously and also becomes self-aware in us at times when our empirical self lapses and we are aware of the world, first as an illusion that appears, and then, as an illusion that is over (or possible). Now this awareness of non-existence is again an illusory one to a still higher awareness for which there is no object whatsoever and no subject. That is, this awareness is neither of existence nor of non-existence and it is the awareness belonging to no subject. It is awareness in itself or pure consciousness. To this awareness, non-existence, pure or virtual, i.e. *māyā*, is itself an illusion that it first enjoys as an illusion and then negates altogether. Negation of a negation here is not equivalent to a positing of object originally negated, for the two negations are not on the same plane of awareness. Non-existence, as illusory or cancelled, reveals the pure awareness that is above any real relation of itself to *māyā*. *Māyā* thus rejected



is known as *tuccha-māyā* and awareness that so asserts itself without any reference to *māyā* is Brahman. Brahman, unlike Ishvara, does not shine against a dark background of the pure object (i.e. non-existence and possibility) in relation to which it may be understood or defined. Brahman is perfectly self-evidential and self-subsistent ultimate reality with no parts or qualifications. Awareness in itself is the ultimate stuff out of which comes everything else and in terms of which all things may be described. This Brahman is thus not known or proved by negating anything, because we are aware of it implicitly (for it works in us from behind) and we are never convinced of the ultimate reality of any object. We question and doubt and negate everything till we reach, after passing through many layers of illusory objectivity and corresponding illusory subjectivity, Brahman-awareness that is self-evidentially ultimate and does not question itself. The dream-awareness is operated from behind by the empirical wakeful awareness which then remains outside the focal consciousness in the marginal one. When this comes to full awareness, it is found to be worked unconsciously from behind by the awareness of non-existence of objects which then remains in the background as an unself-conscious activity. Again, when this awareness becomes explicit, it is found to be implicitly operated by a higher awareness which is beyond existence—non-existence and subject-object. Ultimately this higher awareness becomes explicit, revealing the lower as illusory. This highest awareness that is beyond existence—non-existence has been realized by the Upanishadic and other mystics. 'Then was not non-existent nor existent. . . . That one thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever' (*Rg-Veda, Nāsadīya Sūkta*). 'To think "it is", is eternalism, -to think "it is not" is nihilism: of existence and non-existence, the

wise cling not to either' (Nāgārjuna: *Mādhyamika Śāstra*, Chap. XV). The highest reality is known as suchness (*tathatā*) in Mādhyamika and Zen Buddhism and it is described as beyond all categories,—existence, non-existence, unity, plurality, etc.; it is said to be neither *śūnyatā* nor its opposite. Thus it is that the Zen monks try to realize it through contemplating on such paradoxes as the following: 'This stick is neither what it is nor what it is not, what is it?' It is beyond everything we can think of as an object or subject. *Neti, Neti*,—not this, not this (nor that), says the Upanishad. Dionysius the Areopagite says, 'The cause of all things is neither soul nor intellect, nor spoken or thought of, it is neither number nor order, nor magnitude; . . . not divinity or goodness, nor even spirit as we know it'. So does Ashvaghosha write (in his *Awakening of Faith*), 'All things in the world from the beginning are neither *rūpa* nor *citta*, nor *prajñā*, nor *viññāna*, nor *bhāva*, nor *abhāva*, they are after all inexplicable'. Here the ultimate reality or foundation of things is said to be beyond conceptualization, yet realizable. 'Speeches turn back from it, with the mind', says *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, yet it is always and implicitly working in us and we are aware of it in a way. So it is said that, 'He (also) does not know (i.e. is incorrect) who thinks he knows it' (*Kena Upaniṣad*). It is Brahman in us that causes the illusory levels of awareness, yet it is Brahman again that does not let us rest satisfied with anything short of Brahman and always stirs us to question and doubt the given objects. It is only a matter of knowing Brahman implicitly first and explicitly afterwards, in other words, Brahman in us first remaining as a silent and potential principle and then as a self-aware actuality. To know Brahman is to become Brahman.

(Concluded)



# EVALUATION OF SENSORY PHENOMENA IN MYSTIC LIFE

BY DR. RAJ NARAIN

There are, broadly speaking, two types of sensory phenomena in mystic life: (a) sensory experiences proper of, say, light or sounds—the so-called photisms and auditions; and (b) meaningful and imaginal experiences, popularly known as the phenomena of voices and visions in mystic life. It is necessary to observe this distinction between these two types of sensory phenomena in mystic life, because mystics have assigned different values to each class of phenomena. We shall proceed to consider the evaluations of the second type of sensory phenomena first. The evaluations of Western mystics as a rule refer to this class of sensory phenomena. The first type of sensory phenomena do not figure conspicuously in their evaluations. These have been more systematically treated in Indian mysticism.

We can discern three major attitudes towards meaningful and imaginal experiences in mystic life. The first is represented by Tertullian, an early Church Father, who says calmly that 'The majority of, almost all, men learn God from visions'.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Tertullian's attitude towards visions marks a stage in the development of the Hebrew conception of communion with the Deity. 'In the period presented by the J document, communion with God was thought to be half commensal and half conversational. In either case God was anthropomorphically conceived, although the crassest phases of anthropomorphism were passing away. When we pass from the J to the E document, i.e. from the ninth century to about 750 B.C., we come to a more exalted conception of communion. God no longer appears in human form, freely to converse with men; it is in dreams and visions of the night that He

appears to impart His will and to give inspiration'.<sup>2</sup> The early Church, thus, does not condemn visions in mystic life, as some of the later Western mystics do.

Quite opposed to the view of Tertullian is the second attitude towards voices and visions in mystic life. Its representatives may be taken to be Dr. Tauler and the author of *Theologia Germania*. They reject outright the sensuous elements of mysticism—its apparitions, its voices, and its celestial phantasmagoria.<sup>3</sup> Hugo of St. Victor in his *Mystical Theology* is equally emphatic about discarding all sensuous images in the 'simplification of the soul'. He is careful to guard against the delusions of the imagination, against mistaking a mere visionary phantom—some shape of imaginary glory—for a supermanifestation of the Divine Nature to the soul.<sup>4</sup> St. John of the Cross positively asks the mystic to peremptorily reject all visions and 'special manifestation', come they from God or come they from the devil,—not even to reflect upon and recall them afterwards, lest grievous harm ensue.<sup>5</sup> Molinos follows St. John of the Cross in disparaging visions which he says are often snares of the devil.<sup>6</sup> And Albert Magnus declares that all those visions 'which contain a sensuous element are always dangerous'.<sup>7</sup>

The third major attitude towards voices and visions in mystic life represents a compromise between the extreme views of Tertullian and Tauler. It neither condemns them outright nor accepts them unconditionally. Its followers make a distinction between good and

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Barton: *Communion with Deity (Hebrew)*, Ency. of Rel. & Ethics.

<sup>3</sup> A. R. Vaughan: *Hours with the Mystics*, London, 1895, Vol. II, p. 253.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup> W. R. Inge: *op. cit.*, p. 233.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge: *Christian Mysticism*, London, 1925.



evil visions. The former are believed to come from God, the latter from the devil. The way to distinguish between good and evil visions is given by Walter Hilton in the following words: 'If thou be stirred because of the liking that thou feelest to withdraw thine heart from the mind and the beholding of Jesus Christ and from ghostly occupations—as from prayer and thinking of thyself and thy faults—from the inward desire of virtues, and of ghostly knowing and feeling of God, to set the sight of thy heart and the affections, thy delight and thy rest principally therein, weening that it should be a part of heavenly joy and of angels' bliss . . . this feeling is suspect and of the enemy. And therefore, though it be ever so liking and so wonderful, refuse it, assent not thereto, for this is the sleight of the enemy. Nevertheless if it be that this manner of feeling let not thy heart from ghostly occupations, but maketh thee more devout, more fervent to pray and more wise to think ghostly thoughts, and though it be so that it astonish thee in the beginning, nevertheless afterwards it turneth and quickeneth thy heart to more desire of virtues . . . by these tokens mayest thou know that it is of God, made by the presence of a good angel'.<sup>8</sup>

A good vision is thus distinguished from an evil one by a pragmatic test. If a vision leaves a residue of spiritual strength and determination, it is good and not a deception of the Tempter. Good visions were regarded as special rewards bestowed by the goodness of God on the struggling saint, and specially on the beginner, to refresh him and strengthen him in the hour of need. St. Theresa ably argues: 'Like imperfect sleep, which instead of giving more strength to the head doth but leave it the more exhausted, the result of mere operations of the imagination is but to weaken the soul. Instead of nourishment and energy, she reaps only lassitude and disgust; whereas a genuine heavenly vision yields to her a harvest of ineffable spiritual riches, and an admirable renewal of bodily strength'.

<sup>8</sup> W. Hilton: *The Scale of Perfection*, London, 1927, pp. 16-18.

Although mystics like St. Theresa and Walter Hilton admit the value of good visions in the development of spiritual life, they expressly declare that visions should not be desired or cultivated. For, says the Spanish mystic, self-induced visions inflate us with pride, and do irreparable injury to health of mind and body. St. Peter of Alcantara also observes: 'Much less should anyone desire visions, revelations, ecstasies, and so forth which may be very dangerous indeed to such as are not founded in humility. Let no one be herein afraid of going against the will of God'. Walter Hilton similarly deems it well that visions should not be 'greatly desired', for as visions can both be good and evil and yet are alike in the manner of outward feeling, it is very likely for one who cannot distinguish between them to be deceived and beguiled by the devil.

Thus, in the words of Dean Inge, 'We do not find that the masters of spiritual life attached very much importance to them (visions, etc.) or often appealed to them as aids to faith. . . . Very earnest cautions were issued that no efforts must be made to induce them artificially, and aspirants were exhorted neither to desire them nor to feel any pride in having seen them'.<sup>9</sup> We may analyse the reasons for such an evaluation of meaningful and imaginal experiences in mystic life.

Tauler and the author of *Theologia Germania* condemn visions altogether because these are not warranted on their philosophical presuppositions. These, according to them, do not constitute the highest order of devotion. Tauler speaks of the conversion of the outward man into the inward reasonable man, where senses and reason are welded into one. Man has to fling himself in the 'Divine Abyss' for this purpose. He has to pass through image, above all image and figure, through the outward exercise of the sense to the inward ground of his soul, where properly the kingdom of God is. In that supreme state, sensory experiences would not occur.

St. John of the Cross rejects visions, for

<sup>9</sup> W. R. Inge: *op. cit.*, p. 16.



only two ideas have room in his philosophy—All and Nothing. 'Whatsoever is created is finite: whether actual or ideal, it bears no proportion to All,—it cannot, therefore, be helpful to any on their way to All. The Something is no link between the opposites of All and Nothing. Therefore, if any view of a particular divine perfection, any conception of Deity, or image of saint or angel, be even supernaturally presented to the mind, it should be rejected'.<sup>10</sup>

Similar is the reasoning of Dionysius the Areopagite. He holds that the highest spiritual truth is revealed only to those 'who have transcended every holy height, and have left behind all divine lights and sounds and heavenly discoursings, and have passed into that Darkness where He really is (as saith the Scripture) who is above all things'.<sup>11</sup>

The Yogi in the *madhumati* (honeyed) stage is for a similar reason enjoined not to be led away by the invitations of those-in-high-places.<sup>12</sup> The pleasures of sensual things, deceitful as dreams, should not deflect his attention from the goal, the attainment of *kaivalyam* (isolation).

Apart from philosophical considerations, Christian mystics were led to deprecate visions on religious grounds. The Christian mystical discipline aimed at following the ideal of Jesus Christ. And Christ is believed to have definite modes of working in man. Therefore, there was no need to have recourse to, or to have faith in, other types of spiritual favours like visions, etc. In fact, the danger was that visions may not have their source in Christ, but in the devil. The Bible definitely deprecates visions. In the *Book of Job*, Ch. 42, 5-6, it is said: 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes'.

Psychological considerations were also responsible for an attitude of depreciation towards voices and visions in mystic life.

These phenomena were sometimes interpreted as spiritual favours from God. This not unoften resulted in spiritual pride. And spiritual pride was dangerous to spiritual progress. It was suicidal for the Christian virtue of Humility. Christian mysticism aims at the replacement of self-love by the love of God. Self-love expresses itself mainly in two ways: pride and selfishness. Therefore these two evil tendencies had to be replaced by their opposite virtues, viz. humility and charity. Inasmuch as visions, etc. induced spiritual pride they struck at the very roots of Christian mysticism and sapped its foundation, and were therefore looked down upon.

It has been pointed out that visions and dreams were at one time held to be legitimate instruments of communion with the Deity by the Hebrews. When later, however, this living by dreams and visions was given up in favour of living by faith, the former naturally came to be deprecated.

The medieval masters of spiritual life were also led to condemn visions, because these had become very common in their times. The superabundance of these phenomena led to a reaction against them in the leaders of spiritual life. Moreover, the claims made by the visionaries that the truths revealed to them during their visions were to be prized even if they went against the dictates of reason and the body of established religious doctrines were disconcerting to religious heads, who therefore reacted by adopting an attitude of condemnation towards visions.

The spiritual guides of aspirants reacted unfavourably to visions because of another reason too. They were aware that such experiences often came of disordered nerves and weakened digestion, or as a result of the disturbance of the 'humours'. Says Jeremy Taylor: 'Indeed, when persons have long been softened with the continual droppings of religion, and their spirits made timorous and apt for impressions by the assiduity of prayer, and the continual dyings of mortifications—the fancy, which is a very great instrument of devotion, is kept continually warm and in a

<sup>10</sup> A. R. Vaughan: *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali, III. 51.



disposition and aptitude to take to fire, and to flame out in great ascents; and when they suffer transportations beyond the burdens and support of reason, they suffer they know not what, and call it what they please'.<sup>13</sup>

So far we have discussed the attitude of mystics towards meaningful and imaginal experiences. We may now pass on to consider their views about the role of sensory experiences in mystic life. These, according to the teachings of the Upanishads, are the precursors of Self-knowledge. Says the *Śvetāśvatara* (II.11):

Fog, smoke, sun, fire, wind.  
Fire-flies, lightning, a crystal, moon,—  
These are the preliminary appearances,  
Which produce the manifestation of Brahman in  
Yoga.

The *Maitrī* reveals a similar view. It lays down that seven different sounds are heard on the mystic path; passing through this world of sounds, the Yogi is ultimately united with the soundless Brahman, and becomes indistinguishable from It, just as the flavours of various flowers are indistinguishably lost in the taste of honey (VI.22).

In Hatha-kundalini Yoga we find a reiteration of the Upanishadic view. The *Gorakṣā-paddhati* (II.17) records that when the *prāṇa-vāyu* reaches the void of the thousand-petalled lotus, the sounds of bell, drum, etc. manifest themselves; this is a sign that success in Yoga is near.

Sensory experiences can also be taken by the mystic as 'milestones' in his progress. In a dialogue with his disciple Anuruddha, Buddha expounds the view that the perception of an aura (*obhasa*) and a vision of forms are the criteria by which to judge whether concentration was present or not. Anuruddha had perceived both an aura and a vision of forms. But lately these had all vanished and he did not attain to the after-image. There-

upon Buddha told him: 'But this is what you must attain to. I too, indeed, before I became wholly enlightened and Buddha, perceived both aura and vision of forms. And then in my case too they vanished. So I pondered over the cause of this and discerned that concentration had left me and hence the vision'.<sup>14</sup>

Besides indicating the mystic's progress on his path, sensory experiences subserve a function in the economy of spiritual development. In commenting on *Yoga Sūtra*, I.35, Vachaspati Mishra observes: 'In one performing fixed attentions and contemplations and concentrations there arises, as a result of success in these, that direct perception which is a supernormal consciousness of odours.' Similarly what is said is applicable to the other sense-activities also. And this is to be believed on the strength of the authoritative work and not from probable-reasonings (*upapattitah*). These sense-activities when arisen bring the mind-stuff into a relation of stability and dispel doubt and become a way of approach to concentrated insight'.

The next *Yoga Sūtra* (I.36) gives another example of how sensory experiences help the development of mystic life. It says that an undistressed and luminous sense-activity when arisen brings the central organ into a relation of stability.

Despite the function that sensory experiences play in the economy of spiritual life, it should not be forgotten that they are but means to the end. They may indicate nearness in the realization of the goal, yet they are not themselves the objects of mystic quest. They have, therefore, to be transcended and left behind. It is not necessary to distrust them, as many of the visionary experiences have to be; but like the latter, they have to be discarded and passed over before the goal of mystic life can be attained.

<sup>13</sup> W. R. Inge: *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18, n. 2.

<sup>14</sup> C. A. F. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist Psychology*, London, 1914, pp. 105-6.



# MAN, THE MAKER OF THE UNIVERSE

BY KSHITISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI

The immaterial part of man is known as the Soul. The Soul is really devoid of all distinction conceived to exist *within itself* (as among the various parts of a composite thing). The Soul is also without any distinction usually found between two or more objects similar in nature. The Soul really has no *external* diversity, i.e. the human soul (in one individual or another) and the divine soul are essentially one spiritual Principle. The Subject of knowledge or subjectivity, according to Vedanta, is one, not many.

But do not we in everyday life see the world full of numberless human beings? Do not we experience ourselves as passing through different states (such as waking, dreaming, etc.)? Do not we, as created beings, look up to our external Creator as an object of adoration?

The *Śatopaniṣad* declares in reply that the individuals whom we see are 'such stuff as dreams are made on', and the whole world, we who behold it, as distinct individual knowers or subjects, and the Creator do not constitute Reality. They present a false appearance, and are, like the Apple of Sodom, utterly hollow and unsatisfactory. They are the product of non-knowledge of the true Self, which is the one Subject of all knowledge. This *ajñāna* or nescience is without beginning. The *Śatopaniṣad* text *sublates* the phenomenal show by suggesting the underlying truth of the beholder *himself* above the three states of waking, dreaming, and sound sleep. The one transcendental Self of the beholder is impelled by his unconscious, inner longings (present in *ajñāna*) and creates the manifold world present to his and our consciousness. So long as he does not realize his nature beyond the relative plane of consciousness he will be dominated by *ajñāna* and project to himself the diverse show of men and things. Like the proverbial

spider he is the one spiritual Principle who spins this wonderful fabric of creation out of himself; the one Soul in him thus appearing as the many. Thus multiplicity, strictly speaking, is false. Many souls do not truly exist. Maya or *ajñāna* also becomes sublated with the dawn of spiritual knowledge, having been originally superimposed on the one Subject.

Another Shruti, *Kaivalyopaniṣad* posits the phenomenal show as arising from the one Soul through the ignorance of the transcendental Reality.

'*Puratraye kṛṇāti yaśca Jīvastatassujātam sakalam vicitram*'.

'The wonderful variety of the creation has arisen from the one Soul that experiences the three states'.

Both the Shrutis thus declare the falsity of many souls as being the direct result of nescience. The Creator also is not an external deity, but the same one Soul that, empirically speaking, experiences waking, dreaming, or dreamless sleep.

We may here ask: Is the human soul related to the body? If it is Spirit, not associated or identified with a body, it cannot be called a Soul. The state of embodiment must imply many bodies and their limitations. Besides, the individual mind also must put its own restrictions upon the Soul. How can the human soul then, thus fettered by psychophysical bounds be free from limitations and one only without a second? The *Praśnopaniṣad* enunciates the *oneness* (indicated by the singular number) of the Self, the substratum of the sixteen elements, as well as its *embodied* state as residing inside the body. The spiritual Principle which lives in the body is the one location for the elements like *prāṇa* etc. The Upanishad clearly explains the erroneous nature of life and death (perception of embodied existence and departing from the



body), etc. as being due to wrong identification of the Spirit, the Creator of the sixteen elements like *prāṇa* with the principle of life created by him. The two passages thus *prove* the bodily state of the Soul. Moreover, the mind, as being created, is one and is *contained* in the Spirit-Man. It cannot therefore bound the *container*. The Soul is thus infinite in nature (*vibhu*). The *Praśnopaniṣad* also thus establishes the *oneness* of the Soul.

Those who hold that souls must be many in number raise an objection: If the Soul equipped with one internal organ (mind) is regarded as all-pervading (*vibhu*) then a person must happen to be directly cognizant of the joys and sorrows of others. But this is never the case.

The objection is thus met: The contender himself is the one Soul. All others have been imagined by the one mind that he has (through ignorance of his real nature) created for himself. They are 'such stuff as dreams are made on', and as such do not possess any *separate* inner organ by which they may be said to feel pleasure and pain. Thus there is neither any wherewithal for an actual experience nor any real pleasure or pain, on the part of the shadowy creatures. There is thus nothing for the objector (i.e. one Soul) to know. He continues to be one and infinite in his nature.

The *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka*, and *Praśna upaniṣad* texts also refer to the Soul—characterized by the mind and projecting the material world out of itself—as *one*, as is indicated by the singular number in '*yah*', '*asya*', and '*manasi*'. The *Kaṭha* text describes the state of dream-experience, when all empirical things such as *Prāṇa* dissolve into the mind. Then the Soul, impelled by latent desires and aided by *avidyā* (ignorance of true Self) of marvellous power, creates a romantic world of objects (like wife and children). The Soul does not sleep, but remains awake to experience and enjoy the objects thus created by it. This inner Soul is Brahman, the esoteric Principle in man. It is on this spiritual witness that the wonderful variety of subjective creation,

like the globe, etc. is superimposed. Just as the snake falsely seen in a rope has no existence beyond that of the rope (is in essence nothing but the rope itself), so the whole world of dreams is identical in essence with this one imperishable Spirit in man.

The *Muṇḍaka* text sets down the world of experience as being of the same stuff as the mind, which is the characterizing adjunct of the internal Self without any real form. The world that is presented to consciousness consists of modifications of the mind, into which the world of waking reality lapses in dream, and with the dissolution of which into *ajñāna* during dreamless sleep the world ceases to be experienced.

The reasons why the world of perception is unreal are: (i) that it disappears during dreamless sleep, and (ii) that it emanates on waking from the mind, like sparks from a fire. The vast world thus is an offspring of the mind. (It is to be noted that at first there is the one *universal* mind created by the formless Self, which later identifies itself with it and projects the world of individual men and things, including itself as a person with its *individual* knowing mind).

The *Praśna* text (anticipated in the *Muṇḍaka*) lays down that the world is composed of modifications of the mind. Pippalāda, the teacher here, replies to the question of Gārgya by saying that just as the rays of the sun indistinguishably merge into it at sunset, and again come out of it at sunrise and scatter themselves in all directions, similarly all these familiar objects and the percipient senses merge during dream into the very luminous mind. (The mind is said to be superior to the senses because it regulates their functions. Every sense organ has a presiding deity of its own and the mind, still a brighter deity). All objects of sense-perception become, at the time of dream, one with the mind; the senses, such as the eyes, thus have nothing to perceive during dream. They remain functionless, merged in the mind. The five gross elements (earth, water, etc.) and the material world they compose are made of the stuff of the



mind and created by the Self whose characterizing mark is this mind (i.e. the human soul under the spell of nescience).

The empirical knower (*viññānamaya*), with the mergence of the individual attributes (like the mind, etc.) into *ajñāna*, their cause, himself gets established in the state of sound sleep and is known as *prājña*, the immutable witness of dreamless sleep. This unchanging spiritual Principle by virtue of mere association (not identification or *adhyāsa*) with *ajñāna* becomes the *locus*, where the five elements and their products (such as the mind) lose themselves. This one imperishable Reality (which is the very essence of the individual Subject) does not then see any object of dream-creation (which, together with the creative mind, has totally lapsed into the material cause, *ajñāna*). This is the one Soul or sole Subject of knowledge. In essence, it is pure subjectivity, on which *ajñāna* is merely superimposed; without there being any identification therewith of the spiritual witness, *prājña* shines in its own light after the complete dissolution of the gross elements (earth, water, etc.), their products (the globe, the seas, etc.), the subtle elements, and their finer effects (the ten senses; intellect, mind, etc.; their states), together with the presiding deities of them all.

The purport of the texts of the above-mentioned Upanishads is that it is *one* Soul, with the mind as its characteristic mark (*upādhi*) that has created the material universe.

Another difficulty arises: It is said in the Shastras that the eyes are what pertain to oneself (*adhyātma*), that which is to be seen is the outer object (*adhibhūta*), and the sun-god is the deity (*adhidaiva*) presiding over the eyes. It is the sun who inwardly controls visual perception. According to the above dictum there are clearly spiritual entities besides the human Soul that experiences the three states—sensuous, psychical, and causal.

The difficulty can be thus obviated: Take the state when we experience a dream. The empirical senses cease to operate. The mind creates the dream world. We then change,

as in an ideal romance, into something rich and strange. We perceive a new world, and then feel happy that we have received the favour of some gods.

But is it not the empirical ego in us, which, under the force of sleep, visualizes the romantic world, including the gods and the blest recipient of their favour? Just as we then create the gods and control them, but at the same time, through the foregoing of our empirical nature during sleep, we wrongly regard ourselves to be blessed by the gods we have created; so it is possible for *one* human Soul to be favoured by the gods of whom in truth he is the material cause.

It may be here asked: What is the difference between the soul that imagines a dream, and the souls that are then imagined? We may here take the example of an oil-cloth painting of a finely-dressed gentleman. There is considerable difference between the actual *cloth* on which the painting stands, and the clothes (made of colours only) that the gentleman in paint has been made to wear. Similarly, the shaper of the dream corresponds to the actual cloth, and the shadowy creatures, to the painted clothes. Thus it is clear that the beings of the dream world have no real existence; they are mere appearances. The empirical man who has fallen asleep and projected the magical show alone is real.

This is also clearly borne out by *Praśna*, *Mundaka*, *Kauṣītaki*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Kaivalya*, and *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣads*, all of which point to the falsity of the many created souls (or egos) and reality of the one Soul informing and underlying them. It is this only one spiritual Principle that becomes liberated through the attainment of inner light.

*Praśnopaniṣad* states: (i) that the perceptive senses, such as the eyes, cease to function during dream through lack of objects (like forms of things) and remain thus merged in the mind; and (ii) that the empirical show of things is a mere appearance fashioned by the ignorant soul, limited by the mind which is the material cause of the five gross elements and all their products.



A text of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* uses the very word 'apiyanti' (get dissolved) and establishes beyond doubt the fact of dissolution being the uniform import of the *Praśnopaniṣad* text, though the latter uses the word 'sampratiṣṭhanti'. The *Praśnopaniṣad* text concludes by asserting that he who realizes this *prājñā* or *akṣara* to form his own inalienable nature comes to acquire plenary knowledge of the world which he has built in imagination and sustains by the might of his own being.

When the empirical ego, characterized by the mind (*viññānamaya*), changes, during sound sleep, into *prājñā* (designated by the word *prāṇa*) he does not then witness the phenomena of dream; as they, together with their percipient senses, have now lapsed into the omniscient Soul wrapped in mere sleep. When this *prājñā* (the immutable spiritual Principle beyond self-arrogation or *tādātmyā-dhyāsa* with *ajñāna*) comes to waking life, then the senses (such as the eyes), the presiding deities (such as the sun-god), and the divine abodes (such as heaven) successively come out of the Soul marked by sleep, like sparks from a lighted fire. *Muṇḍaka* Shruti also expresses a similar view. Both *Kauṣītaki* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads* thus posit *prājñā* (the one unchangeable Soul wrapped in sleep) as the cause of creation. (According to the *Kaṭha* and *Praśna Upaniṣads*, however, the omniscient Soul, in sound sleep, is the locus of dissolution of the world).

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Shruti also lays down that creation proceeds from the Soul enveloped in sleep.

The *Kaivalyopaniṣad* also supports the same view and affirms that the human soul that passes in succession through the three stages of waking, dreaming, and sleeping soundly (in the threefold vestures, gross, subtle, and causal that enshrine the soul), as

being withal felt—directly<sup>1</sup> and without intermission—as the 'I' principle is the plenary cause—efficient and material—of manifold creation, including the external divine Maker and all objects of dream and waking life. Such a creation becomes possible by the force of false knowledge, a magazine of many marvels.

Regarding the Soul surrounded by sleep it is said in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* that this spiritual Principle is omniscient, as having been the previous illuminer of the multifarious phenomena of dream and waking life that is now over. It is this one Soul that has created the subtle element of space (*ākāśa*) and the other illusory elements, together with their products (e.g. the mind, the senses, and all objects of perception); as such it is the very God of the universe.<sup>2</sup> It apprehends everything through a bare awareness of whatever object it presents to itself in the three states of experience. It is the Inward Controller (*antaryāmi*) of whatever is spontaneously imagined to be, as in a dream. It is the origin of everything. All things come out of it and again return into it.

In the light of the above survey, we find that it is erroneous to regard oneself as being blest by the gods. The one Soul that creates and shapes all phenomena alone regulates them from within; it is the Supreme Lord.

This is the verdict of Vedanta.

<sup>1</sup> By its own light even before it is known by the mind. The self-identity can be clearly noticed by the subject in the intervals of two mental states, when, with the attentive mind, merged in consciousness, he has a momentary glimpse of his inner Self. Compare Shankara's *Laghuvākyaavṛtti*, and Wordsworth's 'The Boy of Winander'.

<sup>2</sup> This divine semblance finds an echo in 'Hamlet'. 'In apprehension, how like a god'. Romance, in essence, is a search for the soul, which is of perennial interest to man, alike in its strangeness and its beauty.

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"How wonderful! In me, the shoreless ocean, the waves of individual selves rise, strike (each other), play (for a time), and disappear, each according to its nature."

—*Aṣṭāvakra Samhitā*



# JIVANMUKTI AND AVIDYA

BY P. S. SASTRI

Indian systems of philosophy are directed towards the enunciation of a pathway to liberation. Liberation means putting an end to the wheel of life and this in its turn implies the realization of a pure spiritual existence untrammelled by the world of appearances. The Sāṅkhya and Advaita systems of philosophy declare that such an existence is possible even during our stay in this world of appearances. As Pratyagrūpa argues: '*Tad-īha yadi jīvati jñānam utpannam api avidyām na nivartayate, kā vārtā kālāntare tan-nivartate. Jīvata eva ca jñānotpattih, itarathā tad-utpādakakāraṇābhāvena anutpatti prasangāt. Tad-yadi muktir-asti, astyeva jīvanmuktih*'. It is held that Avidyā or the absence of Knowledge is the root cause of our bondage to the spatio-temporal world. It makes us fail in realizing our true nature, which realization alone is the final liberation. Hence Pratyagrūpa asks, 'If Avidyā is capable of being dispelled by Vidyā or Knowledge (=Self-Knowledge), then it must happen even when we are having an embodied existence. If it cannot happen here and now, then what guaranty is there that this Avidyā disappears after the body is left behind by the self?' That is, a true spiritual existence must be possible even in this world of appearances. Besides, the truths of any philosophic system are intuitively apprehended in experiences; and only those who have lived through such experiences are capable of imparting the spiritual instruction. Experience or Anubhava is the final criterion in all such ultimate problems.<sup>1</sup> Unless one has the real experience of truth he cannot guide the rest. The very idea of having a Guru in all philosophic or spiritual matters implies that the Guru must

have the immediate and direct experience of Truth.<sup>2</sup> This can be possible only if *Jīvanmukti* is possible.

But how can we explain the bodily existence of the Jīvanmukta? The body is said to be the product of ignorance. If so, it must cease to exist as soon as the true knowledge of the Self or Reality dawns on the individual. There are three theories which attempt at an explanation of this anomalous position. They are known after the terms *avidyā-leśa* (the residue of ignorance), *avidyā-gandha* (the impression of ignorance), and *avidyā-samskāra* (the momentum of ignorance). It is assumed by all these theories that Avidyā must exist for some time for the free individual; and this is accounted for on the basis of Karma. That form of Karma known as Prārabdha Karma is the most potent one. It cannot be overcome by any means other than that of living it. As the *Vedānta Sūtras* declare, '*Bhogenā tu itare; kṣapayitvā sampadyate*'. Karmas other than the Prārabdha can be overcome; but this one comes to an end only when we have gone through its consequences completely. It is the original burden that we carry with us in our long journey through the wheel of life. It is only after the Prārabdha Karma is exhausted that the individual can be perfectly free from the mortal coil. Till then there must be and will be the bodily existence.

In his *Brahma Siddhi*, Maṇḍana maintains the Samskāra theory of Avidyā. The person who has the knowledge and experience of Reality has no Avidyā left in him or for him. It is only the Samskāra that makes him have a body. To take an example: the rope is cognized as a snake. Even after we know that it is no snake but a rope, for some time still

<sup>1</sup> See Shankara on *Vedānta Sūtra* I. i. 2: '*Anubhavaś-ca yathā sambhavam iha pramāṇam; anubhavāvasānatvāt Brahma-jñānasya*'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. '*Acāryavān puruṣo veda*'; '*Upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninastattva-darśinah*'. Vimuktatman writes, '*Acāryābhāvāt vidyālābhāt mokṣābhāvah*'.



the quivering and the fear continue. This is due to the impetus given by the previous experience. In the same way the body too exists even after ignorance is destroyed. Vimuktatman rejects this argument on the ground that the absence of Avidya amounts to an absence of its Samskara also: '*Samskāra tadvatoh avidyā śarīratvam*'. The persistence of the quivering and fear can only be due to the continuance of ignorance. As such Vimuktatman arrives at the theory of *avidyā-leśa*. The Upanishads have given such intuitions as 'the liberated is liberated', 'being Brahman he becomes Brahman', 'the wise one here becomes immortal'.<sup>3</sup> The commentator of Vimuktatman illustrates this theory by saying that the sun can dispel the darkness everywhere but never the darkness that is behind the curtain. This darkness is technically *tamo-leśa*. One might well retort this commentator by saying that the light of the sun has not entered that place and as such there persists darkness. True knowledge is the antithesis of ignorance. In such a case knowledge has to dispel even *avidyā-leśa*. The so-called Prarabdha Karma also cannot account for the existence of the body since all Karma is the product of ignorance. If the body were to persist even after the destruction of the root cause, then we will be driven to the unhappy conclusion that the body is after all not the product of ignorance, and that the Prarabdha Karma is something superior to ignorance.

Chitsukha, therefore, asks, 'What is *avidyā-leśa*'? Is it a part of Avidya? Or is it a manifestation of Avidya? It cannot be the former, for nescience has no parts in it. It cannot be the latter, for when the original cause is removed, its effect or shadow too must disappear. The author of *Jñāna Siddhi*, who was the teacher of Chitsukha, is said to have maintained in his *Nyāya Sudhā*, that even though Avidya is only one, it has a good many forms (*Ākāras*). One form represents the cause of our belief in the reality of the world; a second one manufactures the objects and

the activity inside the universe; and a third is responsible for the creation of the belief in the existence of the immediate. When the reality of Advaita is grasped the first form comes to an end; the second terminates when truth is realized; and the third disappears when the Jivanmukta has his higher immediacy, while it follows at other times as the cause of the appearance of this universe. With the destruction of Prarabdha Karma this third variety ultimately vanishes. Here at least we have a genuine approach to the problem. The wheel of life, which is due to the Prarabdha Karma, is subject to the various categories. These categories have their origin in the self and their application to the spatio-temporal world. To have an eternal experience of Reality one has to withdraw these categories into himself; and this means absorbing the finite world into the world of consciousness. This happens in every instance of higher immediacy. And in all such cases, Prarabdha Karma ceases to operate since it is only another form of the relation between the individual and his categories which presuppose objects. The denial of the separate existence of the objects amounts to the denial of the categories and the annihilation of all Prarabdha Karma. And Karma as such amounts only to a certain Samskara or impression that we carry with us.

One can reasonably understand that there can be *avidyā-samskāra*. But it is impossible to accept the *avidyā-leśa* unless one prefers to be illogical. If Avidya is not a whole of parts, how can there be a residue? If knowledge is opposed to ignorance, how can there be even a speck of ignorance in knowledge? If the Prarabdha Karma can function even outside of the world of the categories, then knowledge cannot be the knowledge of Reality. That this Karma cannot function with reference to the Self which is the foundation of all the categories, is evident from such an intuitive utterance as '*Nistraiguṇye pathi vicaratām ko vidhih, ko niśedhah?*' It is in this light that Padmapada observes: '*Brahmātmābhīmāninah pūrvavanna samsāritvam. Vaiśayikas-tu sākṣād-*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. '*Vimuktaś-ca vimucyate*'; '*Brahmaiva san Brahmāpyeti*'; '*Vidvān amṛta iha bhavati*'.



*anubhavābhimānah samsāra viṣaye ārabdha karma śeṣa nimittah, timira nimitta dvicandravat'.*

When there is Self-realization, there can be no operation of the wheel of life as before. Something of the Ārabdha Karma seems to remain in so far as the individual still clings to subject-object determinations. The moment we admit the objects as independent existents, that very moment we are also admitting falsely the finitude of the Self. It is this implicit assumption that constitutes the meaning of the Prarabdha Karma.

In this controversy the philosophers have been discussing the necessity of the bodily existence. This question necessarily implies that the body is an appearance, that it is something that gives rise to a false knowledge of the Real. The author of the *Vivaraṇa* maintains that the experience of Reality and of the body do not coexist: '*Kadācid-asamprajñāta ātmaikatva darśanam, kadācid-ārabdha karmopasthāpita doṣa-nimitta dvaita darśanam ceti*'. That is, we have the experience of the Absolute when we are in a state of higher immediacy, and at other times we have the bodily experiences or finite experiences due to the Ārabdha Karma. And the whole Karma, the finite world of categories, is sublated in the higher immediacy: '*Na ca aparokṣa darśanam antareṇa kṛtsna karma vināśah*'. He concludes this argument with the pregnant utterance: '*Prārabdha karmavataś-ca tattva darśanam saśarīrasyaiva sambhavati. Vyāsādīnām ca saśarīrāṇām eva aparokṣa darśanam śrūyate*'. Even when there is the Prarabdha Karma or an experience in the world of the categories, there is a possibility of the apprehension of the Real. The bodily existence does not come in the way, because the body constitutes the mode assumed by consciousness.

The mind needs the external, and it exhibits at every step the co-operation of the adaptations and acquisitions stored in the body. The very ideas of man do not rise from the vacuum but from the universe around him. Nature co-operates with the

mind of man. Pringle-Pattison observes: 'It is certainly on the physical continuity of my organism with the whole material system that my entire knowledge of that system depends. . . . Body is the medium of mind'.<sup>4</sup> In the same way the mind too becomes the medium of the body through which the mental is revealed as related to the physical. The psychical is inherent in the physical and comes 'to light under conditions of relative perfection'.<sup>5</sup> It is because of this that nature becomes a copula for the finite mind and the Absolute. The immanence of consciousness makes out the actual soul to be the perfection of a living body. In the living body there is the awakening of consciousness. The non-living is that in which consciousness has not yet come to develop itself. That is, when the material world reaches a certain level of organization, there appears consciousness. To this consciousness externality functions as a medium. And consciousness sums up in itself the whole universe which is organic to itself. The soul, then, is 'a centre of unity of experience, in connection with a certain material arrangement, which has every appearance of being the condition of its special and distinctive organization, and of its peculiar adaptation to the environment'.<sup>6</sup> The soul has a body 'to store up and adopt the necessary resources for self-maintenance as a distinctive world'.<sup>7</sup> The soul, then, sums up the meaning of the universe in itself because the meaning of the universe is constituted by the spirit immanent in it. The Self as phenomenal is closely linked to the body. It is as phenomenal that we normally apprehend the Self. But it is as noumenal that we are to apprehend it. Such an apprehension is bound to take us to a pan-psychism such as the one implicit in Avachchheda-vāda and in Green's Spiritual Principle.

The Absolute Reality is spiritual. It is a

<sup>4</sup> *Idea of God*, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Bosanquet: *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.



unity of the Self and the not-Self; but the not-Self does not maintain its non-Selfhood. The unity of these two is reproduced in every finite organism. Such a reproduction is the 'negation' of the Real. Consequently the Real is finitized into itself and into its opposite. And what the Jivanmukta does is to overcome this negation or finitude by withdrawing himself into himself. In the state of Jivanmukti it is the total organism that has the experience. The body does not appear as the body but as a living soul. And Bosanquet argues: 'Nature, then, lives and is complete in the life of our minds, each of which draws its content from some particular range of Nature, so that all the detail of the universe is elicited into mental foci, and "external" conditions are held together in such foci, and pass, through them, into the complete experience which we call the whole or the Absolute'.<sup>8</sup>

At this stage we have to be clear about the meaning of the word 'Consciousness'. Take the sculptor working on a marble and giving us a beautiful statue. Who has given the statue? It is not the sculptor alone; the marble too was responsible in its own way. The potential statue lay hidden in the marble and the sculptor had the insight to feel it. The marble is the material copartner of the sculptor in the physical universe. Both the marble and the sculptor co-operated in this adventure; and with his superior intelligence the individual began controlling his object and laying bare its implicit capabilities. And in the evolution of the work, both worked together in the sense that they were united harmoniously in this venture. The finished product represents the meaning or significance of that unity. In other words, in that peculiar unity of the sculptor and the marble there was an idea struggling for expression, for life, for consciousness. That is, there is no pure matter devoid of consciousness and significance. All matter is potential mind. This may appear to be a restatement of the old pantheism. But it is something that presses

itself on our minds and we cannot brush it aside. Nature is potential mind or soul, while the individual soul turns out to be the transition between Nature and the Absolute Spirit. Hence it is that the individual is only a finite centre of experience, a mode of the Eternal, a Self that is delimited or finitized. Any philosophical doctrine has to start with this idea: for, the Self is the first affirmation of any consistent metaphysic of experience. Without the Self there is no experience, and equally so without the object. But the Self and the object cannot be taken as two separate entities. As disparate entities they become only the fleeting phantoms and the creations of a diseased mind. Any experience has a certain character, a certain unity. It is a character which does not belong to any part of this totality. And this character is intelligible only in spiritual terms. Consequently the finite centre of experience and the object constitute the two aspects of the same spiritual entity. And in all higher immediacy we experience this spiritual unity; and during those moments the body ceases to function as a biological appendage. It functions as transformed, as a living soul. In other words, we are not conscious of it as a body, since experience becomes intelligible only with reference to the immanent ideal.

Is there a human experience or does the Absolute alone have experience? It is *we* that take up the point of the whole; it is in *our* experience that a certain idea is found. Any distinction between our experience and the Absolute experience is only *our distinction*. That is, there can be no relativity of knowledge. Nor can the experience be confined only to human beings. All finite centres have experience or do experience.<sup>9</sup> That experience is found only in finite centres is only an empirical fact, a detail within the ultimate fact. Experience is the one and sole ultimate fact which simply *is*. It does not occur. And we have only to show the inner necessity that runs through all its forms. We are concerned only with the question, 'Where

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxvi.

<sup>9</sup> See Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 226.



and how experience "occurs"? The individual self, we have implicitly argued, is a part of the objective content of experience. The other elements too must have the same sort of existence as we have. Every form and kind of existence is a manifestation of the Absolute. Bosanquet speaks of the Absolute as a 'society of selves' and observes that we cannot get the 'content of life, pains, conflicts, sacrifice, and satisfaction' out of a universe composed only of persons. We need an 'outside', and 'other' composed of non-persons. 'It is things, (is it not?) which set the problems of life for persons; and if you turn all things into persons, the differences which make life interesting are gone, except in as far as practical purposes, you turn the persons back again into things, i.e. your food, or your own body, or the place in which you were born. . . . If the instruments and attributes of my life are turned into other persons, I, surely, am deprived even of my character, for my character is not without external activity. This criticism may be mistaken, but it may pass as affirming that we must take as actual the distinctions which give life its content'.<sup>10</sup> But these distinctions cannot remain as distinctions in that higher immediacy of which we are speaking. The distinctions are necessary, and the things should exist along with persons. But they retain their separate individualities in that experience of the Absolute which seems to be the foundational experience. Our universe cannot be a mere universe of persons. It is also a universe of not-selves which do, no doubt, participate in the Absolute experience. The same conclusion is forced on us when we argue from another point of view. Consciousness is an awareness of an 'other', an object. Consciousness, awareness, or experience can be described only in terms of its objective content. That is, it cannot be a member in an antithesis, because apart from its content it is featureless and blank. In the absence of a contrast, the problem of unity does not arise.

<sup>10</sup> 'Contradiction and Reality' (*Mind*, N.S. 57, p. 8).

Our starting point has been 'knowledge', by which we mean the knowledge of Reality. All the 'categories or the principles of mutual relation and explanation are necessarily involved in our experience of the known world, and without them no knowledge would be possible at all'.<sup>11</sup> This implies the necessity of a permanent subject of knowledge with reference to whom alone can we speak of the existence of objects. This individual or subject or Self is both an individual that carries all the Samskaras and the universal that transmutes these Samskaras. The interaction between individuals becomes possible only if they are all embraced within one Reality. This Reality may be said to constitute the unity of the cosmos or more correctly the principle that welds the cosmos into a unity. We arrive at this unity from an awareness of the unity of our Self-consciousness. This implies that each self, though unique in itself because of the *Arabdha Karma*, is not in reality exclusive of the other selves. That is, the fact of knowledge and the unity of the universe can be explained only in terms of a Transcendental Ego which is the condition of time and of the other categories. The denial of such an Ego results in the denial or self-contradictory nature of all our experience. Knowledge, then, is a process with an ideal and the ideal is the actual moving power in the process. It is realizing itself in the process. This knowledge thus turns out to be the articulation of experience. And we can then say that knowledge or experience is the very 'substance' of the mind, its most concrete form of existence.<sup>12</sup>

We have said that consciousness is to be described in terms of its objective content. This objective content is to be described in terms of the characteristic category which unifies the multiplicity of details. And we have then the levels of experience or categories in an ascending series, the higher including

<sup>11</sup> A. Seth: *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. B. Baillie: *An Outline of Idealistic Construction of Experience*, pp. 275, 276.



the lower. Thus we have perception and its category of substance, understanding and its category of force, the self and its accompanying differences and identity, and finally the Absolute or Reality. This puts an end to the distinction between our ideas and the 'real' facts which is the mark of all higher immediacy. At this stage we have the highest knowledge which, though it might sound paradoxical, is the Absolute's knowledge of itself. But is the Absolute self-conscious? Bradley has shown that the Absolute as such cannot be said to be self-conscious and that the Absolute manifests itself in finite centres some of which are self-conscious. This is a daring piece of metaphysics. If the finite centres, at least some of them, are self-conscious, and if to be self-conscious is the ideal of knowledge, there is no reason why the whole itself is not self-conscious. We have only to remember that all matter is animated matter. The many individual consciousnesses have an identical content. They are united

with one another and they are conscious that in it they find their true self-realization.

There are various planes of experience. They are both the stages in the temporal evolution of the cosmos and the moments in the eternal completeness of the Absolute. The temporal is only the shadow of the eternal. Yet each mode of experience has its own value which it contributes to the whole. The highest stage is different from all the lower, contains the lower within itself as moments, and offers the clearest knowledge of the principle operating in all its stages. Since Reality is spiritual, all the levels of experiences are the moments of the highest. They appear as stages, but in fact they are not stages. It is this appearance that the Jivanmukta leaves behind. This leaving behind is in reality the overcoming of ignorance by knowledge; and knowledge is the knowledge of the Self. This Self-realization constitutes the content of all higher immediacy or *Aparokṣānubhūti*.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The poem, *Swami Vivekananda*, with which the current issue opens, is from the pen of one of the fortunate few who saw and heard Swami Vivekananda and are happily in our midst today. She lives in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A. . . .

*When the Soul hungers for God*, nothing else can ever satisfy the devotee. As the story of Uddhava's visit to the devoted milkmaids of Vrindaban betokens, the more intense and absorbing one's love and devotion to God are, the clearer and swifter one's realization of Him is bound to be, even when such love and devotion are directed towards an Incarnation without knowing that he is God. . . .

Prof. Gordon W. Allport of Harvard Uni-

versity pays a handsome tribute to *Sri Ramakrishna*. . . .

*The Philosophy of Education* by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, is a radio talk in the series 'The Concept of Man', broadcast by him (on June 5, 1952) over the All-India Radio, New Delhi, to whom we are thankful for their kind permission to reproduce the script of the talk for the benefit of our readers. . . .

Dr. Raj Narain of Lucknow University, a new and welcome contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, examines the significance of non-material and mostly esoteric but tangibly experiential phenomena which form a substantially valid branch of the history of every religion in the world. In his brief *Evaluation of Sensory*



*Phenomena in Mystic Life*, the learned writer aptly indicates how such phenomena found a legitimate place in Indian mysticism, while they failed to evoke appreciation, much less acceptance, in the West. . . .

In his learned paper *Man, the Maker of the Universe*, Prof. Kshitish Chandra Chakravarti, M.A., B.L., has attempted a critical and thorough-going examination of the abstruse implications of Indian monism. Being the outcome of much original and independent research, the author's writings have made a distinct contribution to the advancement of knowledge and literature on creative Vedanta, and we hope to publish further articles from his erudite pen in the coming months. . . .

The conception of Jivanmukti may be regarded as the pivot of Vedantic thought and culture, though it has been the source of much discussion and controversy. The thought-provoking treatment of the subject, *Jivanmukti and Avidyā*, by Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., will be read with interest.

### THE GOOD EARTH AND ITS ABUSE

How many of us realize that the flowering of even elementary forms of civilization depends on the intelligent harnessing of Nature's rich resources? It may seem strange that man's efforts at building a civilized society should be dependent upon such an obviously mechanical factor as the careful conservation of the resources of the earth's soil. The history of the growth and progress of civilizations bears testimony to this fact. Man's lack of foresight in dealing with the hidden forces and treasures of Nature has been not a little instrumental in delaying or arresting the progress of society.

'There is ample confirmation of the fact that thousands of square miles of desert country were once thickly forested or cropped, and the change for the worse has been brought about by the agency of man, not Nature. Every traveller in Asia and Africa has seen the ruins of once great cities which, when flourishing, were surrounded by fertile fields, but which are now in the heart of deserts'.

Thus observes James Read in his thought-provoking article on 'The Abuse of the Earth',

circulated by A. P. S. and reproduced in the *Hindu*. He traces the conversion of once fertile lands into arid deserts to the practice of wrong agricultural methods. Referring to the vexed problem of increasing food production throughout the world, he writes:

' . . . man is ruthlessly destroying the very source of existence—the soil of the earth. Apart from the menace of war it is no exaggeration to state that the gravest menace which threatens the human race . . . is the methods by which man himself is ripping from the earth's surface the soil which Nature has taken hundreds of millions of years to create.

'As a result, in four out of five continents there is relentless advance of arid, desert conditions. In America, Africa, Asia, and Australia, the sands are waiting like wolves at the very doors of civilization, every year swallowing up tens of thousands of acres of once fertile land. . . .

'In brief, these are the stages of the gradual deterioration of the soil. Primitive man disturbed it no more than did the animals, but in his first step upward he became a devastator. By exploiting the soil he deprived it of its protective covering, clearing virgin forests, burning off and over-grazing the herbage, and exhausting the humus'.

While some natural calamities resulting from earthquakes and cyclones are beyond human control, it is within man's power to arrest the denudation of the soil, whose ill effects are more calamitous as they are not perceived immediately but only after several decades. Man's dependence on the soil for the production of food reveals the vital role the good earth plays in the affairs of men. Man, whose welfare rests upon the cautious use of the soil, has to devise and enforce ways of dealing with the earth on which he lives and which preserves and produces the essentials of life. This problem is all the more important today in view of the growing population of the earth.

The future of our civilization demands that those of the present generation should seek to solve this problem from an ethical, rather than a constitutional or economic, point of view in the interests of posterity. For, often such abuse of the earth may not appear so serious a menace for the moment, though it spells disaster in the long run. The



nations of the world are feverishly preparing for defence against atomic attack. But the demands of human progress call for more circumspection in respect of the expending of funds and energies for the one purpose of increasing armaments. It is necessary that these should be diverted to the solution of more urgent human problems such as the

conservation of the 'good earth' and the discontinuation of the practices that lead to its abuse and waste. The forces that make for disintegration are imperceptible and hence more insidious. Unless counter-measures contain the forces, man, with all his grand aspirations, may yet find himself a helpless victim of a Frankenstein's monster.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**A PRIMER OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE.** BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI. *Published by the Author, 45, Lloyd Road, Royapettah, Madras. Pages 116. Price Re. 1-8.*

Sri Ramaswami Sastri has distinguished himself by his valuable publications on cultural subjects of perennial interest. This book, intended to supply the needs and requirements of those who do not look for any lengthy treatment of the vast subject, is a small and admirable one of its kind. The book, though small in size, is really remarkable in its contents, since it purports to present in a nutshell the rise and growth of the whole of Sanskrit literature—both Vedic and classical. The writer himself tells us that the present attempt is to present a bird's-eye view of Sanskrit literature, in all its fullness and variety, for the benefit of the ordinary man. There is not the least doubt that the attempt is a great success.

The book is divided into nine chapters in which he glances over the Vedic and classical literature, touching upon those topics which and those poets who are of real interest to the common man. He has done full justice to the Vedic portion, but the classical Sanskrit literature, vast and varied as it is, has not received equal treatment at his hands. The author is boldly nationalistic in his cultural and literary outlook and he furiously denounces those occidental scholars who pin their faith on the theory of the foreign origin of Aryan culture in India. On account of the limitation of space, he has described the literary achievements of only the very best poets in Sanskrit. The epics, Mahā-Kāvyas, and dramas have been described in some detail, but prose literature, aesthetics, and metaphysics have been given lesser treatment in a few pages. The learned writer has a forceful style, and he has presented the panorama of Sanskrit literature in a manner which evokes admiration for his lucid treatment and appreciation for his depth of scholarship. We hope the learned author will be able to write out a full-fledged history of Sans-

krit literature, with due emphasis upon the Indian method of criticism and appreciation, for which he is by his learning and attainments so very admirably qualified.

BALADEVA UPADHYAYA

**THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA.** BY AAMIR ALI. *Published by the Oxford University Press, Mercantile Buildings, Lal Bazar, Calcutta 1. Pages 138. Price Rs. 5.*

In this short but well-written life-story of Buddha, the author has presented in a simple yet graphic manner a fascinating picture of one of the greatest spiritual personalities of the world, narrating the glorious events in story fashion having an eye to its suitability for children. By a skilful blend of facts and legends concerning Buddha, the learned author has transformed biographical history into a moving tale which can be read with ease and closely understood by children as well as adults. The circumstances of the birth of the Blessed One, the story of his childhood, his great renunciation and Illumination, the long years of his preaching and teaching, and the final scenes of his life are all woven into the texture of the work with vision and imagination, creating the very atmosphere of Buddha's times. The book is also interspersed with the teachings of Buddha, which, while not appearing too technical or abstract, fit naturally with the scheme of the story, thus making it a very appropriate channel for conveying to young minds the sublime truths of ethics and spirituality. The book is appropriately illustrated with delightful sketches drawn by Leela Shiveshwarkar.

**SATYAGRAHA IN CHAMPARAN.** BY DR. RAJENDRAPRASAD. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House Ahmedabad. Pages 236. Price Rs. 2-4.*

Days of freedom have come, but there the story does not end. As a free nation we have yet to work hard, in fact, increasingly, to secure all-round national stability. This reissue of *Satyagraha in Champaran* is timely and helpful. The reader



gets, as he progresses through the book, into the spirit of the great struggle for emancipation. And this is enough. Real emancipation is not far off. How things happened in Champaran and how those very things were re-enacted on a larger scale throughout the country, under the same inspiring and unfailing leadership—that of Mahatma Gandhi, are here described by one of India's most eminent leaders—Dr. Rajendraprasad, the President of the Indian Republic—who was actively and directly associated with the Champaran Satyagraha campaign. The book has its own special appeal and fascination for the patriotic citizens of independent India.

B. S. MATHUR

WHITE DAWNS OF AWAKENING. BY LOTIKA GHOSE. *Published by Thacker Spink & Co. (1933), Ltd., 3, Esplanade East, Calcutta. Pages 96. Price Rs. 4-8.*

The poems of spiritual ecstasy in this volume are inspired by deep sincerity and feeling, but their expression is at times faulty. There are too many echoes of Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, and Swinburne, not to speak of Tagore, as in 'high azure dome', 'the mystic unborn has opened its casements', 'the dawn of a far awakening beyond troubled visitations of birth', 'Oh world, oh life, oh time'. A second failing is the extreme haziness of meaning and the excess of unfused imagery, especially in the first group of poems. The mid group of poems—'Waves of Eternity'—has, however, some splendid pieces, like 'My Abode' and 'The Meeting', which reveal the poet's lyrical gift at its best. 'The Cross Roads' has poignant beauty and 'Identity' is a fine lyric of love, reminiscent of Jacobean poetry.

A. V. RAO.

SUBLIME THOUGHTS. BY KANWAL SINGH. *Available from the author, V. & P.O. Jharli, Dt. Rohtak, Punjab. Pages 206. Price Rs. 3.*

This is a miniature 'dictionary' of wisdom compiled by an ex-Subedar of the Indian Army, who has taken pains to collect and bring together a large number of elevating thoughts from great thinkers and writers of every part of the world, covering a wide range of subjects, ancient and modern. There are nearly 1,800 quotations in all, distributed under suitable topical headings, which, in turn, have been arranged alphabetically, to facilitate easy reference. The quotations, all in English, bearing upon almost every aspect of life, are culled from such varied sources as the Book of the Dead of the Egyptians, the Vedas, and the epics, and the writings or speeches of Kālidāsa, Shakespeare,

Emerson, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and many more eminent persons.

#### BENGALI

SWAMI TURIYANANDER PATRA. *Published by Udbodhan Karyalaya, 1 Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta—3. Pages 345. Price Rs. 2-4.*

Swami Turiyananda, more familiarly called Hari Maharaj, was one of the leading direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He was not only a saint and a seer but also a lover of humanity, who was pre-eminently fitted to lead countless persons along the spiritual path to the attainment of the highest goal of life. When he wanted that Swami Turiyananda should go to America to carry on the Vedanta work inaugurated by him in that country, Swami Vivekananda told him, 'Oh, learning and books they have had enough! They have seen the Kshātra power (meaning himself); now I want to show them the Brahmana!' Swami Turiyananda was the very embodiment of the great and powerful Brahmānya ideal—calm, meditative, utterly unselfish, austere, pure, and holy, and his life was an inspiring example of Vedanta in practice, influencing and animating all those who came into contact with him. He did not write any books as such. But all his elevating thoughts and teachings are preserved for us in the records of his illuminating and instructive conversations with devotees and in his numerous inspiring letters written to religious aspirants who eagerly sought solutions for their problems in spiritual life. His soul-entrancing conversations were translated from the original Bengali and published serially in the columns of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

The Letters of Swami Turiyananda were first published in two parts. In this second edition, all these letters, together with about eighty new letters, have been brought together in one volume. The letters are arranged chronologically. Highly useful foot-notes have been added, giving the full texts of Sanskrit Shlokas alluded to in the letters and also complete references to Shlokas quoted therein, besides adding useful and exhaustive explanatory notes where necessary. The letters reveal the depth of learning and the profundity of spiritual realization of the Swami and his masterly grasp of the inner meaning of the Scriptures. He was like a blazing fire and each and every one of these letters possesses this spiritual fire in large measure. His was a harmonious combination of Jñāna and Bhakti, with due emphasis on personal character and individual effort. It is a vade-mecum of the most practical spiritual instructions, suited to every type of truth-seeker, and an invaluable boon to the Bengali-knowing public.



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FAMINE RELIEF SUNDARBANS, 24-PARGANAS

The public is aware of the relief work the Ramakrishna Mission is conducting in the Hasnabad and Haroa Thanas of the Sundarbans in 24-Parganas, for which an Appeal was published in our last. Till the end of the first week of July, over a period of about three weeks since the starting of the relief work, the Mission has distributed 444 mds. 9 srs. of foodstuffs to 6,741 adults and 1,303 children. From the second week, many more areas have been inspected and help rendered. Relief is being extended to a section of the poor and middle-class people of the Taki Municipal area as well. The Government of West Bengal has kindly sanctioned 2,750 mds. of rice and as many maunds of Atta for free distribution.

The above are some of the worst affected-areas. The relief activities will have to be continued till December next, the distress growing more acute in September.

In addition to food, there is need of cloth, medicines and milk for children. The expenses of transporting foodstuffs by boat and cart to long distances, which are very high, as also the cost of maintenance and travelling of the workers, have to be met by the Mission. Difficulties of communication and transport, through rivers that are in spate, in bad weather conditions, have made the task of the workers very hard, and they are often falling sick. In spite of all this, the work is being pushed on and is gradually getting regular.

Large funds are required to make the relief adequate and extensive. The generous and kind-hearted people all over the country should contribute liberally to the Mission's Relief Fund and thus help mitigate the distress of their unfortunate sisters and brothers.

Contributions for the purpose may kindly be sent to: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math (Howrah).

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## THE HOLY MOTHER BIRTH CENTENARY

### AN APPEAL

A great many people all over the world are well acquainted with the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. But a majority of them do not know much about Sri Sarada Devi—The Holy Mother. Her simple and unostentatious life, lived mostly in cloistered seclusion, and remarkable for its depth and universality of outlook, has many valuable lessons for humanity.

Betrothed to Sri Ramakrishna as a young girl of five, she grew up all by herself in her quiet village home. When she was about fourteen years old, Sri Ramakrishna came to his native village to recoup his health. He then called Sri Sarada Devi to his side, and taught her many useful and precious things, both secular and spiritual. This brief contact left an unforgettable impression on her mind.

Except for this meeting, they lived apart as if they were utter strangers. For Sri Ramakrishna was then engaged in a long and

strenuous spiritual discipline, and was all the time absorbed in divine ecstasy, completely forgetful of the world and its concerns.

In the year 1873, when Sri Sarada Devi was nineteen years old, rumours reached her ears that Sri Ramakrishna had gone mad. She felt sorely distressed, and at once decided that it was her paramount duty to be by the side of the Master and serve him in his hour of need. Unmindful of the toils and difficulties, she walked on foot all the distance of about 60 miles from Jayrambati to Dakshineswar.

The subsequent life-story reads like a super-miracle. She found Sri Ramakrishna always in a God-intoxicated state of mind. Yet when he met her, he admitted her claims upon him as his wife, but pointed out that his mind was wholly given to God. Sri Sarada Devi was in no way behind the Master in her spiritual hankering. She readily renounced all vulgar pleasures of the family life. She



only wanted to partake of his exalted spiritual attainments. She thus became his first and foremost disciple, and during the thirteen years of Sadhana under the Master, she attained to such summits of spiritual realization that she was spontaneously venerated as the Holy Mother in the Order of Sri Ramakrishna.

After the passing away of the Master, for nearly thirty-four years she ministered to the spiritual needs of thousands of sincere seekers of God. She lived her quiet life, far from the madding crowd, but was always full of sympathy for the struggling souls caught in the meshes of worldliness.

All those who had the rare privilege of coming in contact with her felt that she was an embodiment of grace, purity and simplicity. Her readiness to help all without distinction of caste, creed or colour, even regardless of their merits, was most striking. Her simple words went home to the hearts of the listeners and gave them complete satisfaction.

A story of this unique life is bound to help in popularizing the noble and lofty ideals of womanhood of our motherland gathered through the ages. This precious heritage needs to be placed prominently before our rising generation, which is in imminent danger of losing its national moorings.

It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things that we celebrate her Birth Centenary, which falls in December 1953, in a befitting manner. To give a start to such a worthy cause, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math at Belur have formed a Provisional Executive Committee, with Swami Madhavananda, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, as its Chairman.

The Centenary Celebration Committee is now engaged in the task of preparing an authoritative and exhaustive account of Sri Sarada Devi's life. The publication 'The Great Women of India', dealing with their lives and contributions in various spheres of life and different epochs of our history, is also under preparation. A short biography of the Holy Mother will also be published in as many Indian and foreign languages as possible.

In addition to the above publications, the Committee has sponsored the following plan for the celebration:

1. The Birth Centenary should be observed during the period between December 1953 and December 1954.

2. An Album containing pictures of the Holy Mother in as many postures as possible as also of the important places associated with her memory should be published.

3. Steps should be taken for the collection and preservation of articles used by the Holy Mother as well as her letters.

4. Pilgrimage to Jayrambati, Kamarpukur, and other important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother should be organized.

5. An arrangement should be made for putting tablets at important places associated with the memory of the Holy Mother.

6. An Essay Competition on the life of the Holy Mother should be organized for students.

7. Ladies' Meetings in different places, particularly in women's institutions, should be organized to discuss the life and teachings of the Holy Mother.

The Committee has purchased, at a price of Rs. 2,300/-, the house at Jayrambati where the Holy Mother spent the major part of her rural life. Efforts have also to be made for the repair and proper maintenance of this house and other dwelling places associated with her memory.

The Committee has decided that all contributors of Rs. 20/- and above to the Central Celebration Fund will be enrolled as General Members of the Committee.

It is estimated that more than a lakh of rupees will be necessary for the successful implementation of this plan of celebration. We appeal, therefore, to all who believe in the advancement of womanhood and the worship of motherhood to contribute their mite for this worthy cause.

All contributions for the purpose may kindly be sent to: The Secretary, The Holy Mother Birth Centenary, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, West Bengal.



# MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

## REPORT FOR 1951

*Origin and Growth:* The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas in the Almora District, U.P.—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. In addition to its religious and cultural work through publication of books and the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata*, and a library consisting of about 6,300 select books on various subjects, the Ashrama also runs a hospital to serve the suffering humanity as embodied divinity, without any distinction of caste or creed, and high or low.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being in response to most pressing local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that it was found necessary to open a regular dispensary in 1903. Since then it has developed into a hospital and has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 to 60 miles taking 4 to 5 days for the journey.

The hospital has 13 regular beds. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much larger number of indoor patients, there being a great rush for admission. People come from such great distances and in such helpless condition that they have to be accommodated anyhow in improvised beds.

The operation room is fitted with most up to date equipment and various kinds of operations can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. There is also a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Almost all kinds of medical help that one can normally expect in a small town in the plains are available here. A small library, a gramophone, and a radio set are also provided for the recreation of the patients.

*Work during 1951:* The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor department was 175 of which 124 were cured and discharged, 31 were relieved, 15 were discharged otherwise or left, and 1 died. In the Outdoor department the total number of cases treated was 7,395 of which 5,653 were new and 1,742 repeated cases. Altogether 53 different kinds of diseases were treated.

The visitors' remarks show a great admiration for the tidiness, equipment, efficiency, and usefulness of the hospital.

The hospital has to depend for the most part on the generous public for donations and subscriptions. The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1951, shows Rs. 8,335-5-0 as the net expendable receipts and Rs. 7,240-2-0 as the expenditure during the year. The hospital needs funds for its improvement and expansion. Contributions for endowment of beds, one or more, may be made in memory of near and dear ones.

The Management express their grateful thanks for the donations by the generous public and hope they will extend the same co-operation on which the work of the hospital depends and thus help to serve the sick and the diseased in this far-away mountain region.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI YOGESHWARANANDA,  
*President, Advaita Ashrama,*  
P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE PIONEERS

*Ta id-devānām sadhamāda āsann-ṛtāvānah kavayah pūrvyāsah,  
Gūḍham jyotih pitaro anvavindant-satyamantrā ajanayann-uśāsam.*

They revelled with those Radiant Powers,  
Intoxicated by the Wine of Life.

Their Yearning Hearts  
Saw the Vision rise—  
A Poem of shimmering Joy:  
The sure rhythm of the Cosmic Will  
Bubbled in the flow of their Eves and Morns.

The shrouded Light  
They had sought and found  
In the deep cavern of the guarded gloom;  
And then the soft thrills of their lucent Soul  
Had flashed as Truths,  
Whose silent fiat  
Created the unaging Dawn.

Such were they, our Fathers  
Who had gone before,  
Beaconing to the distant goal.

—*Maitrāvaruṇir Vasiṣṭha (Rg-Veda, VII. 76. 4).*  
(Translated by Anirvan)

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## LETTERS OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA\*

Almora  
11. 8. 1916

Dear B— Babu,

. . . I pray to the Lord that you may continue to call on Him with a healthy body and a tranquil mind. 'Sing His name as long as there is life in the body'. This is the essential thing. 'O Companion of the heart! I shall allay the pangs of my heart by singing your name'. There is no better prayer than this. '*Prītiḥ parama-sādhanaṁ*' ('Love is the supreme spiritual endeavour'). What other Sādhana is there? Love towards all. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has said, 'One single boat ferries men across (to and fro)'. He has also observed that fully in his life. '*Anirvacanīyam prema-svarūpaṁ*'<sup>1</sup> ('The nature of Love is inexpressible'), '*mūkāsvādanavat*'<sup>2</sup> ('Like the enjoyment of taste by the dumb who cannot express it')—having said these Nārada further says, '*prakāśyate kvāpi pātre*'<sup>3</sup> ('It is expressed only in some rare persons'). And he tells us the means of attaining this Love: '*Sankīrtiyamānaḥ śighramāvirbhavati, anubhāvayati bhaktān*'<sup>4</sup> ('Being worshipped constantly, He reveals Himself quickly and makes His devotees realize Him'). Therefore, there is no better means than the singing of His name. So it has been said:

*Harernāma harernāma harernāmaiva kevalam,  
Kalaṁ nāstyeva nāstyeva nāstyeva gatiranyathā.*

('Only the Lord's name; there is no other way in the Kali Yuga').

For this reason, the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) also used to sing, 'O Mother Shyāmā, my only hope is thy name. What need have I for *kośa-kuśi*? . . . ' '*Harernāmaiva kevalam*' ('Only the Lord's name')—this is the gist. . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

\* \* \*

Almora  
26.11.1916

Dear B— Babu,

. . . I feel very sorry to know about your family troubles, but I do not know what to say. . . . It seems that your troubles are due to the fact that you cannot behave as it is necessary to do in leading a householder's life.

And again I wonder, are those who are very clever in the ways of the world quite happy? It does not appear to be so. . . . It finally comes to this that none is really happy. So the Lord says, '*anityam-asukham lokam-imam prāpya bhajasva mām*'<sup>5</sup> ('Having obtained this transient, joyless world, worship thou Me'). There is no happiness in this world.

\* Translated from the original Bengali.

<sup>1</sup> *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra*, 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>5</sup> Part of the paraphernalia of ritualistic worship

<sup>6</sup> *Gita*, IX. 33.



We think we could have been happy if we had been able to act this way or that. But this is a vain thought. This world itself is '*asukham*' ('without happiness'); so the Lord says, '*imam prāpya bhajasva mām*' ('Having come into it, worship Me'). The essential thing is to worship Him alone. 'Let happiness come, let misery come, go on worshipping Me. This impermanent world is not going to last for ever. Whether it be happiness or misery, both will go. If you do not worship Me, everything else will be in vain. For, neither happiness nor misery will remain. I am alone eternal; by worshipping Me you will inherit that eternal treasure. Therefore, "*bhajasva mām*" ("worship Me")'. . . .

For how long will this relative existence (*samāra*) last? Pass the few days somehow, being engrossed in His thought, without forgetting Him. What else is there? It is enough to pass the days somehow. And they will never be impassable through His grace. . . .

Spend the remaining days left to you by submitting yourself to the will of the Mother. And pray so that you may be able to do so. . . . Do you now see how men stop at nothing to make money? The sense of right and wrong is thrown to the winds; the only consideration is to make money somehow. . . . Let whatever happen, pass your days bearing everything patiently by relying on the Lord. 'He who (humbly) puts up with everything is saved, he who does not is destroyed'. Steadily holding on to the truth of these words of the Master, pass your days, whether in happiness or in misery, and you will become heir to infinite happiness. . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

## RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND THE MARCH OF HUMANITY

BY THE EDITOR

'Unless a nation be literally sodden with its religion, it is bound, when the opportunity comes, to throw it away in favour of self-interest. And this is the defeat of civilization. This is the true bar sinister on the scutcheon of history'.

—*Sister Nivedita*

As everyone knows, the ultimate purpose of civilization is the development and enrichment of human personality. And the progress of civilization is indicative of the march of humanity in all ages. Strictly speaking, the one great topic of interest in life can and should be the nature and destiny of man himself. Man's place in the universe and his relation to God or the forces seen and unseen, that have brought that universe into being, have formed the leading theme of every philosophic or scientific investigation. None can deny that both science and religion have played their equally

vital roles in seeking to evolve a better social order and usher in greater peace and happiness for tormented humanity. Philosophers and scientists have addressed themselves to the common task, though in varying ways and degrees, of developing for man the spiritual, moral, and material resources of the world so as to make living physically and mentally more meaningful and less formidable. It is but natural, then, that today we should feel not a little surprised at the virulence with which the long-drawn-out conflict between what may now be called 'rigid' science and 'dogmatic' religion



was absurdly sought to be maintained until recent times. Even till not long before the development of modern physics led to the discovery of the new background of science, it was widely held that there was an irreconcilable difference between the spheres of religion and science.

Whatever the advantages and disadvantages, there is no doubt that the applications of science are playing an ever increasing part in our everyday life. The growth of science from the earliest times reveals how man has developed through its scope and method, an efficient means for the understanding of the universe and the control of human environment. Most of the modern improvements that may be said to have carried civilization forward have sprung from the lifelong labours of many a scientist. The benefits conferred by science have minimized man's helplessness in the face of Nature's vagaries and limitations. At present scientific knowledge has assumed limitless proportions and is becoming a subject of yet greater and greater social and political concern. One could probably say that today science is the indispensable handmaid of civilization. The scientific temper and the scientific standard are in evidence everywhere, so much so that any the least departure from the rigidly accepted temper or standard is quickly dubbed as 'irrational' and 'unscientific'.

But it is a happy sign of the times that since the last thirty years or less scientists have been deeply concerned not only with the new discoveries in the realm of astronomy, physics, and biology, but also with the profound philosophical implications of these discoveries. Though they keep themselves aloof from the 'philosophy of a metaphysician', scientists of the present day almost always speak of the 'philosophy of a scientist'. The laudable efforts of Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans in this direction of constructing a consistent and purposeful philosophy out of modern science have attracted considerable public attention. Mr. Dunne's famous experiments on time and Prof. Rhine's experiments

in telepathy and clairvoyance present ample evidences of the fact that there is something non-material but very tangible in man which is independent of time and space. Science could no longer remain preoccupied merely with non-human and sub-human matter. The study of man himself grew more important and raw physical science had perforce to reckon with the other vital sciences of life and ultimately with the core of the science of the Spirit of man. The myriad-faceted mysterious universe continues to present ever new phases of wondrous behaviour, not only in Nature, but also in the life of man, that one is led to exclaim with Sophocles: 'Wonders are many, but there is no wonder wilder than Man'.

In this context, it would be appropriate to know what J.W.N. Sullivan, who is a scientist of repute, observes; for, his knowledge of science, coupled with his understanding of philosophy, throws a flood of light on the deeper problems of man's existence. He writes:

'If man's independence of space and time be indeed a genuine discovery, then the question of a purpose in life, together with many other questions, acquires a profoundly different significance. Although subject to space and time, he is not wholly conditioned by them. Even if all his activities and aims have reference to his spatial and temporal existence, these things are not exhaustive of the nature of man. The humanitarian cosmogony may still be accepted, but it wears an entirely different aspect when it is no longer regarded as exhaustive. It may still be held, for instance, that man's function, within this space-time framework, is to manure the soil of the future harmony. The service of human progress may be the best purpose that he can propose to himself—within the given set of conditions. But this purpose does not account for what existence he may have independent of those conditions. The description of man as an instrument to serve the ideal of progress is not sufficient, even if it be a correct description of his purpose within the space-time framework. What we have called the theological outlook denies, as we know, that the true purpose of man, even within this space-time framework is to serve merely humanitarian ideals. His purpose, on this outlook, should have reference to his eternal destiny. But although the speculations we have been discussing do something to make the idea of man's immortality more plausible, they reveal nothing of an immortal destiny. The intuitions on which the theological



cosmogony is founded receive no support from these modern speculations. The importance of these speculations lies in the basic outlook they make possible. If they should be confirmed, the questions of man's place in the universe, of the purpose of life, of the status of our religious intuitions will all be fundamentally affected'.

Religion, to say the least, has been much misunderstood. A century ago, people who swore by the conclusions of science considered religion no more than a bundle of superstitions and meaningless rituals. Obviously these people were unable or were not serious-minded enough to break through and reach beyond the crust of superficialities with which religion was often found enveloped. Rather, they were incapable of resisting the intellectual enchantment that the physical sciences and their practical applications seemed to spread around them. Today the situation, though not so deplorable, needs a lot more reorientation. There is, no doubt, an increasing recognition by men of all persuasions of the important role of religion in promoting the welfare of man. Even if religion does not directly give man comforts and labour-saving gadgets, it is being more and more clearly understood that it does offer man something more important and necessary, viz. the Science to save him from the abuses of science. 'Granting the many comforts and even cures that science has given man,' observes Dagobert D. Runes, 'the question still remains unanswered whether all these conveniences atone for the enduring servility of science to war-bound tyrants and their cliques. It would be in order to reconsider the value of science in the light of the foregoing, as the sinister potentialities of science increase with its progress, unless they can be harnessed by a world government. Perhaps science has harnessed enough of the powers of Nature; let us now harness the powers of science'.

It is agreed on all hands that the purpose of religion and science, as of social institutions and ethical practices, is to help and hasten the onward march of humanity to its destined goal. To this end nations, big and small, have united and made collective security agreements and mutual or regional pacts. To this end

have patriots, politicians, and leaders of the people exerted themselves. And to this end, verily, have philosophers, saints, and seers given their best energies. Humanity is on the march, though the progress is not as rapid as everyone would wish it to be. The values and forces that make for progress have to contend with the evils of periodic wars and other anti-social forces of disintegration. It is a fairly obvious truism that peace hath her victories no less than war. Unluckily, the great achievements of today's peace are brought to nought by tomorrow's war. When wars get started, the powers of scientific knowledge come in handy for quick and ready utilization in every possible manner. 'The actions of bad men', says Buckle, 'produce only temporary evil; the actions of good men only temporary good; and eventually the good and the evil altogether subside, are neutralized by subsequent generations, absorbed by the incessant movement of future ages'.

Yet it is right when it is claimed that science itself is neutral and not to blame for the blame for the misuses it is put to. Science is as neutral as a knife or a stick in the possession of a hiker who may possibly need it for the benefit of himself and his companions and which he may as well use in offence or defence against those he considers his enemies. In other words, what the scientists mean to say is that science *per se* does not augment the brutality or destructiveness of war, much less does it engender war. It offers the most destructive weapon on the one hand and the most efficacious wonder drug on the other, and it is for the individual concerned to choose between the two. A wrong choice by unwise and short-sighted leaders, incapable of restraining their own passions and those of their frenzied followers, is bound to result in a catastrophe of universal magnitude. Ultimately it is the individual man who is solely responsible for whatever progress is achieved and whatever destruction is wrought in the world. And man, the greatest of all killers of his own kind as well as of other species, commits atrocious crimes in private and public life, in national



and international spheres,—because he has no control over himself and consequently over the powers he possesses.

It is here that religion plays its most vital role, in safe-guarding the survival value of mankind. Understood and practised in its widest and most essential significance, religion, shorn of its crudities and superficialities, has been the greatest stabilizing factor of civilization. While the scientific method is necessary and important, the higher and more comprehensive vision of man and Nature, born out of spiritual illumination, is indispensable for judicious and constructive utilization of that method in the interests of human welfare. 'Blessed is he', said Pasteur, 'who carries with him a God, an ideal, and obeys it: ideal of art, ideal of science, ideal of the gospel virtues; therein lie the springs of great thoughts and great actions; they all reflect light from the Infinite'. If anything hinders most the march of humanity it is the unbridled egoism of men whose minds are dominated by ideological conflicts and whose hearts are ruled by selfish interests. The hedonistic pleasure principle that characterizes modern civilization is prone to deify science and ridicule religion, for the former is seen to multiply wants while the latter counsels restraint and temperance.

The progress of man is commensurate with the amount of peace, stability, and security he is able to find in life. Judging from the perilous times such as those in which we are living, when thousands are subject to fear and frustration and tens of thousands are disturbed and unhappy, it is certain that unregenerate human nature cannot be trusted with irresponsible power. And where such irresponsible power is backed by death-dealing weapons, appalling inhumanities cannot but be expected. Men who know most are unequivocal in their declarations that the danger to civilized community life is not inconsiderable and that the hope of release from the prevailing uncertainty, apprehension, and drift lies in spiritual values and better human relations. The abiding truths of man's inner being, fostered by the non-sectarian and non-dogmatic religious way of

life, are required to be reasserted and realized before man can recapture the ability to make substantial contributions to the general advancement of culture and civilization.

That science by itself, bereft of the reassuring message and transforming influence of religion, could not dispel fear, distrust, and egocentricity is beyond question. While scientific progress has exerted a tremendous influence on our patterns of thought and behaviour, it has left the chief dilemma of our generation unsolved. To set store by purely scientific considerations alone would therefore prove disastrous. Einstein one of the world's greatest thinkers, has uttered a warning, saying, 'Radio-active poisoning of the atmosphere and hence the annihilation of life on earth has been brought within the range of technical possibility'. What is the way out of this impasse created by man himself? This world-famous thinker, whose devotion to science is second to none, did not mince matters when he added, 'All of us . . . should realize that we have vanquished an external enemy, but have been incapable of getting rid of the mentality created by war. . . . The idea of achieving security through national armament in the present state of military technique is a disastrous illusion. . . . This mechanistic, technical-military psychological attitude has inevitable consequences'. This should leave no doubt in the mind of anyone that the world would go back well-nigh to the dark ages if another global war were to afford the opportunity for the destructive powers of science to play havoc with human life and property.

The problem for scientists, as for others, is how best to utilize modern scientific knowledge for human welfare. This almost invariably depends on the other problem of our times, viz. how best to ensure peaceful co-existence and co-operation of the nations of the world. At a time when the means of mass destruction are being perfected on every side and the armament race is assuming a hysterical character, it is best to ask oneself, 'How to accelerate the march of humanity by adhering to science alone? And if religion does not



help, then what else will?' In some of his recent speeches, Gen. Eisenhower very appropriately stressed 'the necessity for a spiritual rebirth in America and for a return to the simple religious values of long ago'. He meant to convey his view that a country which permits large numbers of her people to turn atheists and agnostics may be said to have gone astray and to run the risk of disintegrating morally and spiritually.

Today the erstwhile cleavage between religion and science is looked upon as a myth. Religion and science are not irreconcilable, much less antagonistic. The spirit of religion and the spirit of science are not fundamentally at variance. Man's mastery over the physical world, through the application of the method of science, has brought him very close to the borders of the metaphysical world, the study of whose laws belong clearly to the domain of religion. Observing that the well-known conflicts between science and religion in the past must be ascribed to misapprehension of the situation and mutual mistrust, Einstein says: 'Now, even though the realms of religion and science in themselves are clearly marked off from each other, nevertheless there exist between the two strong reciprocal relationships and dependencies. Though religion may be that which determines the goal, it has, nevertheless, learned from science, in the broadest sense, what means will contribute to the attainment of the goals it has set up. But science can only be created by those who are thoroughly imbued with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. This source of feeling, however, springs from the sphere of religion. To this there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. I cannot conceive of a genuine scientist without that profound faith. The situation may be expressed by an image: Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind'.

Human progress is likely to be retarded in a world where the majority of the inhabitants lead a humdrum existence, half frightened of

and half indifferent to the immediate future. Technology and applied science have revolutionized living conditions to such an extent that mankind is caught up in a struggle for quick and often uneasy adaptation. At the same time it would be idle to pretend that these have not complicated life and not threatened the survival and security of man. A social order on the basis of scientific or economic blueprints, without a conscious striving towards the common spiritual goal, is likely to be unstable. The real core of lasting peace is to be found in the great teaching, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', and this is possible only through Vedantic unity and harmony. World organizations and world governments are not unnecessary; they serve a useful purpose of secondary importance. In the course of his penetrating analysis of the essence of the relation between religion and science and the greater importance of spiritual ideals, William McDougall writes:

'When we consider the larger and higher activities of man, it is as clear as daylight that those activities conform to laws quite other than the laws of physics. As hitherto formulated, the laws of the physical world are mechanistic (which means that the future course of events is wholly determined by the present and the present by the past) and, therefore, non-creative. This remains true no matter how subtle, immaterial, vague, and amorphous the entities, substances, or ultimate postulates of the modern physicist. The activities of men, on the contrary, are purposive; they conform to teleological laws and are creative in the fullest sense. Especially is it clear that man's higher activities are prompted and sustained by spiritual ideals, by his aspirations towards truth, goodness, and beauty. It is ridiculous that it should be necessary to point to, and reaffirm, such obvious and indisputable facts. Yet the science of the nineteenth century was almost quite blind to them; while the reactionaries of today still cling wilfully to that blindness, acclaiming it a virtue. Their position is pathetic in that, whereas the belief in the mechanistic determination of human life was deduced from certain principles of physical science, the physical scientists themselves have now abandoned those principles in their own sphere, while the reactionary biologists and psychologists remain clinging to the unsupported dogma like sailors clinging desperately to the mast of a sinking ship deserted by its officers'

It is true that religion, too, like science, has abused its powers and often proved a bar



sinister to human welfare and progress. Yet, it has brought about perfect harmony between man and man, and man and the universe in such degree as nothing else has done. Religion could never be outmoded. It supplies the needed spiritual sustenance to the soul of man and helps him subjugate his untamed passions and integrate his split personality. Suggesting that science and religion should co-operate to promote human happiness, Swami Nikhilananda (Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York) made the following significant observations, in the course of the discussions at the Seventh Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion held in the U.S.A.: 'It is true that religion, too, like science, has abused its power. It has exploited people everywhere in the world. But in spite of these aberrations, one cannot find fault with the ideal of religion, which is to endow man with the knowledge of the soul, the universe, and the ultimate reality. With-

out this knowledge, the frictions and tensions of life cannot be removed. Whenever religion deviates from the ideal of truth and wanders away into the dark lane of superstition, science should insist that it follow the scientific method of experimentation, observation, and verification, which also is the method followed by the genuine mystics. Religion does not consist of believing in a dogma, but in the experience of truth.

'Science and religion are not in conflict; they are not even incommensurable. They cross each other's path in the daily experience of life. A genuine scientist has something of the feeling of awe and reverence towards the ultimate reality which transcends the observed facts of the world, and the religious mystic is not altogether free of the critical attitude of the scientist. I do not think science has disproved spiritual values. What science finds fault with—and rightly so—is the superstition which very often passes for religion'.

## NEW WORLD SYNTHESIS

BY ELIOT C. CLARK

The realistic conception of the world of today, which is based upon power and its material manifestation, does not take into consideration that other less apparent and invisible power which is latent in aspiration and the spiritual inheritance of different peoples. That its manifestation may differ is but the differing mode of its expression. Fundamentally it is the eternal quest of Reality. The will to live is in the liberation of life.

At no time in the history of the world has material production been greater, and probably at no time has there been greater unrest. The solution cannot be merely by domination or economic exploitation.

Progress is so inseparably associated in the

popular mind with mechanized convenience that we do not realize that man may progress towards the abyss as well as towards the heights.

The dazzling spectacle of modern invention has been so outwardly alluring that man has lost relation with his inner self. In consequence he has been victimized by incessant desire and drowned in the labyrinth of his own delusion. The realization of life and the mode of living have lost their reciprocal relation. But man in his potential Being has remained unchanged.

It is apparent that whereas modern means of communication and industrial distribution tend to standardize and delocalize the mode of



living, the biological and historical development of varied peoples is in a different and often disparate state of evolution. The East is suddenly confronted with, an industrialized world which is not born from its integral evolution and is quite apart from its natural tradition. Its new leaders are endeavouring to assimilate and utilize this mechanized civilization and traditional culture is everywhere in retreat.

In the Western world the materialistic quest of Reality has ended in its illusion. Money-power has been unable to coin contentment. Inherited wealth has demonstrated its dangers and turned its gold into sensuous dross. Economic disintegration is but an indication of the inefficiency of human co-operation. The search for the hidden treasure begins anew.

It is in this quest that the ancient wisdom is being rediscovered. The outward lure of life is returning to the inner light of realization. For, what can the world mean apart from experience and what the experience apart from the experiencer? 'Know Thyself' echoes from the silence of the past, the echo of eternal recurrence.

The 'mystical' East is being transformed by the 'material' West, whereas the invisible undercurrents of the East are permeating the thought of the West. Thus the traditional distinction of East and West is losing its theoretical significance and the transformation ends in meeting.

This is far other than the orientalizing of Western thought or the materialization of the East. It is rather a new orientation. This can arise only from the living quest of Reality, not in the fixity of theoretical belief. Science has been the searchlight of the West. Its revelation has given new meaning to ancient wisdom. Its light has cleared away the debris of barren accumulation and pierced the shadow of theological tyranny. Having reached the theoretical point of the unknown, its inquisition is finished, and metaphysics posits again its livingness in faith rather than doubt which is death. Science remains confined to the phenomenal world of manifesta-

tion and theoretical conclusion, while Spirit is released in its living realization. This knows no orientation other than its own realization.

What is the genesis of this awakening? It is the renewed awareness of the limitations of the analytical mind and the recognition of that which is the Source of mind. Mind is both a projection and a reaction and in consequence is in ceaseless change, the victim of its own manifestation. It becomes bound by the world of phenomena and is freed by the noumena or the realization of its own substrata or Self. Analysis is regenerated by synthesis. Thus, instead of the rigidity of abstract conclusions and the tyranny of tradition, the Spirit soars again in the empyrean of the unknown, the infinite air of freedom. God is reborn not as an ecclesiastical conclusion but as a living verity, the Source of life.

The 'mystical' East, which was for the West but an image of its own aspiration and longing for escape, reappears as the eternal present; the physical meeting of the East and the West as the changeless and the changeable; the hidden treasure discovered in the debris of disintegration. Old mental boundaries have passed away; ancient impetus has spent itself in habit. Life is in transformation. The scientific quest of Truth leads again to the dark chamber of the mind whence it began, wherein faith rather than doubt, can alone enlighten it.

Is the Spirit of the East compatible with that of the West? Is Spirit limited by its locale, chained for ever to the subconscious self? These abstractions are in fact but names, a generic distinction based upon mental habits, the degenerate result of a once living genesis.

In the West, mysticism came to be associated with occultism and other-worldliness, the psychic gratification of unfulfilled desire, the transposition of the will to be, to the illusion of the Beyond. But in the East, mysticism is the recognition of the eternal Presence, its indwelling bliss, the everlasting Now.

For nearly two thousand years the civiliza-



tion of the West has been endeavouring to assimilate the revelation of the East in the universal symbol of the Christ Spirit. Now, from the ruins, as once upon a time in ancient Rome, comes the rebirth, the eternal recurrence, the timeless voice: 'It is here; It is now; It always was; It always will be'.

It is not in outward sign that the new revelation is announced but in the radiation of living realization; not in the dogma of political prohibition and wilful domination; not in suppression but in emergence. Destruction ends in transformation. The modern tyranny is but the aggrandizement of the egoistic will to power, the maturation of its own past. Destruction is the end of a series and therefore the beginning of a new succession.

Like stars which shine forth when the mists pass away, so in the spiritual firmament that surrounds the world, innumerable guiding lights illumine the darkness and indicate the

way. Souls separated by distance but transcending space; separated in time, the voice of the timeless uniting.

This is the spiritual message of the East and the West of today, the new world synthesis; not the inseparable barrier of prejudice and mental preconception; not the finality of estranged dogmas; but the nostalgia of the soul, the quest of Reality, the search for the hidden treasure.

What is the meaning of emergence, but the recurrence of that which does not either go or come, for ever constant. 'The door of Truth is covered by a (brilliant) golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer, so that I who have been worshipping the Truth may behold it' (*Iśa Upaniṣad*, 15).

In the face of the present tribulations is this but a fable? Count not the law by numbers. Without the numeral 'One' can numbers be?

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## SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD

BY S. K. DAS

It is usual in our country to remember and celebrate the birthday of those who had lived and shown us the way to God, the way of Truth and Love, in other words, the Life Divine. A Western poet would say that the life of such persons 'justifies the ways of God to men'. Those of us who believe in the Incarnation would go further and say that God dwells not merely in the soul of everybody and in everything but also reveals and encloses Himself 'within the bounds of a privileged man'. He undergoes 'bondage' to lead men to freedom; the Creator bodily descends into His creation. To them the homage to god-men like Sri Ramakrishna is indeed divine worship. To others, who do not believe in the Incarnation in the physical sense, it is equally an act of merit, an act of

worship, to pay homage to the life and teachings of one like Sri Ramakrishna; for, if he was not an Incarnation, he was *at one* with God, completely attuned to that Spirit which is inherent in the least fragment as well as in the whole cosmos.

But a homage in empty words is no homage. To be able to delineate the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, one must imbibe some of the teachings for oneself. One must, at least, make an earnest effort in that direction. Without that earnestness, mere words will be in vain; for, did he not himself discourage what he called 'lectures',—empty verbiage, which did very little good to anybody? In simple language, but with unmistakable candour and truth, he said that those alone can be teachers and preachers who



have received the necessary badge and acquired the right to teach. Very few of us have that competence. Hence Sri Ramakrishna classified men into four categories: those who are of the earth and completely earthy (*baddha jīva*); those who strive and may or may not succeed (*mumukṣu jīva*); teachers and great men (*mukta jīva*); and those who live on this earth for others, but are above all earthly limitations (*nitya jīva*). For one who is still groping or striving, mistakes are natural.

It is a commonplace that humanity has now reached a stage of crisis in civilization. Such a situation is not new, and had occurred before, with the collapse of an old order and the emergence of a new. Some people think that this is how progress takes place. Those who are near the crisis think that it is a collapse, a revolution; but, looking backward from a distance of time, the process seems almost evolutionary. Standing at or near the crisis, the question which is confronting us all is, in the words of a modern thinker, 'whether the human animal, as he exists at present, is capable of solving the problems raised by his own aggregation, or, as he calls it, his civilization'. The problems are many in number and varied in nature. The thought that has been exercising my mind is—have not the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna a very great and direct bearing on the solution of these problems? It is usual in these days to classify life and its activities and the problems which arise from social relations. Some problems we call political problems; others, economic problems; others again, moral problems, psychological problems, and so on. We try to evolve ready-made formulae for the solution of these problems—political formulae for political ills, economic formulae for economic ills, moral formulae for what we call moral ills. In our quest for quick remedies, based on specialization, there is a tendency to forget humanity as it is, to ignore man, in his integral aspect, i.e. to lose sight of the fundamental unity of man's nature in the divergent and apparently discordant activities. The whole is lost in the midst of details. It is in

respect of the whole nature of man,—his difficulties, tribulations, limitations, and aspirations—that Sri Ramakrishna's sayings—inimitable in simplicity, sympathy, and directness, almost like the candid statement of a child,—have the greatest bearing. Classification is useful up to a point and within limitations; carried beyond its limitations, it misleads. Sri Ramakrishna did not reject classification; but, with the true insight of a God-intoxicated soul, he indicated that no permanent solution of the ills of man is possible unless we aspire to and reach a transformation of a more fundamental character, where the entire way of life, the entire attitude to life, is changed. Such has been the message of many a spiritual and national leader of India, including Mahatma Gandhi—a man of reasoned action, based on truth,—who often said that without a change of heart no permanent solution of our problems could be had.

By our commonly accepted standard, Sri Ramakrishna was not an educated person. How false and misleading our standards can be is shown by the very facile way we confuse knowledge with mere book-learning. We mistake the superficial for the real. Real knowledge is very seldom high-sounding. Sri Ramakrishna himself said that a pitcher sounds when it is not filled with water; as soon as it is completely submerged and is full of water, it ceases to make any noise. It is the same with knowledge. As long as we are busy with mere intellectual display, there is visible the froth and foam of subtlety of argumentation. When true knowledge is attained, not by mere intellectual appreciation but through realization, argumentation becomes irrelevant and meaningless. With what a lovely parable did Sri Ramakrishna explain this! Somebody asked him about the different attributes of God. He answered saying, 'Why bother, when any one of His attributes was enough?' He related a story: 'If you go to a mango garden and want to enjoy a fruit, do you enquire *how many* fruits there are in the garden?' About mere book-



learning he said: 'What will you learn by merely reading books? So long as you do not reach the market, you hear the indistinct uproar; when you reach the place, you hear the voices of real people'. He laughed like a child when he was told about Hamilton's statement, 'A learned ignorance is the end of philosophy and the beginning of religion'. In his direct, simple approach he taught everybody, the learned as well as the unlearned, in the true tradition of medieval India, in the same way as Kabir, Dadu, and others taught the common people in India the philosophy of love and truth.

Yet, Sri Ramakrishna was a modern contemporary leader of the Indian spiritual renaissance. He did not discard reason, nor did he ask his disciples to give up the world. He pointed out that the path of knowledge was far more difficult than the path of love and devotion; he taught his disciples a way of life based on earnestness, prayer, non-attachment, absence of egoism, devotion, and love. He placed reason in its proper place, and indicated how in the midst of our daily round of duties—through pain and pleasure—we can reach a higher consciousness of harmony and synthesis. Such a way of life involves discipline—physical, mental, and spiritual, and is not attained without effort. But the importance of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is that he *demonstrated*, in flesh and blood, that the way of life he

indicated was capable of attainment. Time and again he demonstrated that the petty jealousies and rivalries, even the zeal for reform and doing good to others, were due to egoism, which was the cause of much misery. Of many other problems of life also did he indicate the solutions—simple, straightforward solutions, without any haziness of intellectual subtlety. The uniqueness of his approach lay in this that, in an age of reason and intellectual awakening, he demonstrated a way of life, at once simple and child-like in candour, yet majestic in its comprehensive sweep.

Today the world is too much with us, so much so that it is breaking us by its sheer weight. To lighten that burden we have to go back to Sri Ramakrishna. It is futile and irrelevant to compare Sri Ramakrishna with other contemporary leaders of renaissance India. Sri Ramakrishna himself laughed at such comparisons. Truth is one, but appears in diverse forms and shapes and its apprehension is relative. As such let us pay homage to all those who have realized the Truth in any form,—in the words of Sri Ramakrishna himself: 'Greeting to the feet of the Jñānin. Greeting to the feet of the Bhakta. Greeting to the devotee who believe in the formless God. Greeting to those who believe in God with form. Greeting to the men of old who knew Brahman. Greeting to the modern Knowers of Truth'.

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## EVOLUTION AND GOD

BY DR. MOHAN LAL SETHI

All those thinkers who count in the domain of natural sciences have accepted the fact of evolution. It is admitted that the present-day animals and plants have descended from simpler animals and plants by slow and gradual changes through the ages. If there is

difference of opinion among naturalists, it is in regard to the method or mechanism of evolution. Whether new species arise in the manner Lamarck would have us believe or as Huxley de Vries or Darwin postulated, is in dispute. New species probably arise by all the three



means put together but separately emphasized by these great naturalists.

Working back from the most complex animals and plants, we come ultimately to very simple forms of life which can be called animals or plants with equal justification. These simple living things are claimed by botanists as plants and as animals by zoologists. From these simple living things, on the border line between animals and plants, arose first the simplest animals like the *amoeba* and the simplest plants like the *chlamydomonas*. From *amoeba*-like ancestors have evolved all the animals, the topmost of which is man. From *chlamydomonas*-like simple plants have evolved all the plants, the topmost of which are like the wheat plant. Given the simplest forms of life, we can easily explain the origin of the most complex by evolution. How did the simplest forms of life come into being? Did they arise from non-living matter? We do not know. We do not see living things arising from non-living things now. If living things originated from the non-living in the past, we should be able to see something similar taking place with our own eyes nowadays. This has not been observed so far. This objection is met by some naturalists by saying that the conditions for the origin of living things from non-living things were propitious in the beginning of the earth but they are not so now. This is really begging the question. Others opine that the simplest forms of life which have evolved into the existing animals and plants on the earth were blown to this earth from some other planet. This is simply shifting the point of enquiry. How did the simplest living things originate in that other planet? Thus the problem of the origin of the simplest living things or the origin of life itself remains shrouded in mystery.

The theory of evolution disproves the theory of special creation as adumbrated in the *Book of Genesis*, but it does not explain the origin of life. The need for a God, as imagined by the author of the *Book of Genesis*, is eliminated by the theory of evolution, but

the need for a God to breathe life into the simplest living things continues. Atheists do away with the necessity of God altogether. They think that evolution explains everything, including the origin of life. It is not generally known that Darwin himself was not an atheist. The great Sanskritist, Prof. Max Müller, writes, 'Darwin himself went so far as to maintain most distinctly that his system of Nature required a creator who breathed life into it in the beginning'. That God breathed life into non-living matter in the beginning is as crude a solution of the problem of the origin of life as the act of creation described in the *Book of Genesis*.

While thought was crystallizing in favour of evolution in Western Europe, the industrial revolution was making rapid progress and its fruits were being gathered in the nineteenth century. In the ground prepared by evolution, watered by technological advance, and hedged in by political supremacy of the European nations over the whole world, the seed of materialism has grown like the bean stalk of Jack, the giant-killer, in the fairy-tale. No wonder, religion, spirituality, and God find no place in the lives of the majority of the materialists and their servile mimics.

When the fact of evolution was firmly established in regard to animals and plants, scientists began to look for evolution in other domains, e.g. in astronomy, chemistry, cosmogony, geology, physics, and sociology. Scholars of comparative religion and theology have seen evolution in the concept of God.

For European and American authors of books, religion and theology began with the Jews who lived around the Mediterranean, just about two thousand years ago. The religion of the Jews is Judaism. Their God is Jehovah. Jehovah is a powerful 'tribal' God. He is very partial to the Jews. He is often invoked by His chosen people, the Jews, to let loose plague and destruction on the enemies of the Jews.

Jesus Christ was a Jew. Christ felt that the concept of God held by his people was incomplete. He improved upon it. Christ's



concept of God can be gleaned from the Lord's prayer and biblical stories. The Lord's prayer is given in the gospel according to *St. Matthew*, (in Chapter VI, verses 9-13). These verses read: 'After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen'. In *St. John* (Chapter IX) it is narrated that as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth. And his disciples asked him saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God be made manifest in him'. Thus the God of Christianity became the Father of all, but He continued to live in heaven from where He ruled the earth and in order to manifest His power He created some people blind from birth.

Islam being posterior in time to Judaism and Christianity, the Prophet drew much of his inspiration from ancient Jewish tradition. He preached very noble ideas, though the glimpse of Ultimate Reality which he had seemed not so all-embracing. Allah remained rather partial to the 'faithful'. He continued to stay on in heaven from where He used to send His mighty messenger to Mohammed.

In these religions, God is a 'creator god' with varying degrees of power and might. These people conceived God in the image of man. The 27th verse in the first chapter in the *Book of Genesis* reads: 'So God created man in his own image'. Voltaire, the great French satirist, has remarked somewhere, 'It may or may not be true that God created man in his own image, but it is very true that man has created God in his own image'. Such concepts of God which attribute greatly enhanced human powers to God

are said to be anthropomorphic concepts of God by students of theology. God did not evolve beyond this stage among the majority of the Jews, Christians, and the Muslims. No doubt some of the Catholic and Sufi saints sounded a higher note, and, having had a comprehensive realization of the Ultimate Reality, sang of Him as the Immanent and the Transcendent God. But such saints never became popular among the Semitic peoples and were dubbed heretics.

With most common people all the world over,—whether Jew or gentile, Christian or heathen, the faithful or the infidel,—God is like a potter. Just as a potter makes and shapes pots and pans, God creates living things. Though the 'potter God' is the basis of the anthropomorphic concepts of God, He varies from person to person. It reminds us of a shepherd. The shepherd lived in blissful ignorance. He grazed his sheep year in and year out. In winter his sheep used to be infested with lice. He would then sit down in the sun and pick lice off his sheep. This shepherd believed in God. One day he felt he was full of love for his God. In that state he had a brain wave. He exclaimed, 'If I happen to meet you, O God, I will pick all the lice off your body'. The poor shepherd could imagine of God no better than his sheep. His God was infested with lice!

Under the impact of evolution and modern science the anthropomorphic concepts of God have given place to atheism, agnosticism, and materialism. All the same, advanced thinkers in Christendom have been groping to find a new concept of God to install in place of the anthropomorphic God who has been dethroned and exiled.

Leaving the West and its colonies in the New World in matters of thought and religion, let us turn to India. India has been the cradle of religion, spirituality, and philosophy. In India philosophy and religion are interchangeable terms. Whereas the quest of biology is the solution of the riddle of life, the quest of physics and chemistry is non-living matter, the



quest of astronomy is the heavenly bodies, the quest of philosophy is the why and wherefore of the whole universe. Whereas the natural sciences employ the five senses only, philosophy as understood in this country, employs intuition as well. The object of philosophy is to lead the earnest seeker right up to the Ultimate Reality or the Godhead. The seeker is called the *draṣṭā* or seer, who is brought face to face with Reality. Philosophy has, therefore, been called *darśana*. *Darśana* is the means of seeing the Reality. There have been several schools of philosophy in this country, although the better known are six. Of these six, the best known and that which makes the greatest appeal to all intellectuals is the Vedānta. The philosophy of the Vedānta is contained in the Upanishads—the final books of the Vedas. Vedānta teaches that the Godhead is immanent as well as transcendent. The Godhead is within every creature and object. He is the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe. The potter is the efficient cause and the clay is the material cause of a pot. The Godhead is both the potter as well as the clay in regard to the universe.

The sublimity of creation is described as follows in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: 'As the spider spins the web from within itself and then withdraws it within itself, as herbs sprout on the earth, as hairs grow on the body and head of man without any effort, so from the Imperishable Being the universe springs out' (I.i.7). Here three similes are employed to illustrate the spontaneity of creation from the Imperishable Being—Brahman. As the spider spins the web out of its own body and again withdraws it into itself with perfect ease, so also this universe originates from Brahman and again dissolves into it spontaneously. This illustration might suggest some purpose and some effort, however small, on the part of Brahman in creating the universe just as the spider has a purpose and has to make an effort to spin the web. This doubt is dispelled by the second illustration. As plants grow on the earth quite naturally without the

least purpose and effort on the part of the earth even so does creation come out of Brahman. This illustration may suggest that Brahman is an unconscious and inert substance like the earth. This doubt is removed by the third illustration. Just as in the case of man, a conscious being, hairs grow on his body without any effort, so from Brahman which is Consciousness itself, the universe emanates. The first illustration suggests that Brahman is the ground of the origin and dissolution of the universe. The second asserts that even after creation the universe rests in Brahman, being totally dependent on it. The third simile states that creation is an effortless extraneous projection of a certain Power of Brahman which does not constitute its real essence which is Consciousness itself.

Again, in the same Upanishad, we read: 'This is the truth: Just as from a blazing fire thousands of sparks, similar to it in nature, issue forth, so O my friend, manifold beings are produced from the Imperishable and they go back into it again' (II.i.1). Accepting these verses of the Upanishad, Brahman is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe.

It may be asked, 'What is Brahman?' Our language cannot describe Brahman because it belongs to an order of being of which we have no experience in our ordinary sensuous life. Sages and seers who have reached the super-conscious state in Samādhi affirm that Brahman is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute (*sat, cit, ānanda*). European mystics name it as the Consciousness that pervades the universe.

Brahman, immanent in all living things, has adopted the method of slow change with modification and thus evolves into newer and newer forms. Evolution is the method or mechanism of creation adopted by the Godhead or Brahman.

How Divine Consciousness or Brahman, which is immanent in living things, makes them evolve into higher and higher forms of



life can be understood from the following analogy:

Prof. J. B. Rhine of Duke University in the U.S.A. has been working on extra-sensory perceptions, that is, perceptions of which we become aware apart from the five senses. He has discovered and established beyond any doubt that the fall of dice can be influenced by the mental states of certain individuals. He has shown that the human mind can directly influence matter not only within the body but outside the body as well, as in the fall of the dice. He has proved this by statistical data. Now, if the human mind can influence matter within and without the body, the Divine Mind, immanent in the universe and transcendent to it, can be imagined to impose forms on matter and create an endless variety of living things. Because of the Divine Consciousness inherent in them, and of which they are unaware, lower forms of life are tending higher and higher, trying to reach the culmination of evolution. Man is the ultimate term of this long series of living forms in this process of evolution. Man is a kind of trinity—body, mind, and soul.

Man's soul, *ātmā* or self, is identical with Brahman. On account of ignorance man does not know it. Vedanta teaches that the purpose of man's life is to dispel this ignorance. His final end and aim is to unfold and manifest the Godhead which is eternally existent within him. Man must try to know the Godhead and be united with it. This is Liberation. This is *mukti*. Jalalud-Din Rumi, the Sufi saint, had a clear picture of this evolutionary process before his mind's eye when he wrote the lines:

I died a mineral and became a plant,  
I died a plant and rose an animal,  
I died an animal and I was man.  
Why should I fear? When was I less by  
dying?  
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar  
With the blessed angels; but even from  
angelhood  
I must pass on—all except God perishes.  
When I have sacrificed my angel soul  
I shall become that which no mind ever  
conceived.  
O let me not exist! For non-Existence  
proclaims—  
'To Him we shall return'

## IS WORLD UNITY POSSIBLE?

BY JIBENDRA

The problem of world unity has been very much in front since mankind twice came within an inch of self-extermination in a short period of barely three decades (1914-45). Indeed, the more mankind is being torn and battered by fratricidal wars, the more are men's thoughts turning, as if by a sheer instinct of self-preservation, towards some kind of unity or other. Thus the League of Nations was the direct outcome of World War I. The UNO, which had its origin towards the end of World War II, has been inspired by a similar objective of peace and unity among mankind. If the League failed in

its objective, it was because it was not truly representative of the nations, not thorough, comprehensive, and just, giving equality of status and ensuring political and economic justice and freedom to the struggling nations of the earth. Hence it came to nought after a few years of precarious and tottering existence. The UNO seems to have begun under more favourable auspices, but because of the rule of oligarchy and the powers of veto granted in the Security Council, it does not seem likely to meet with a better fate than its predecessor. The signs of disruption have already set in and unless its constitution is modified and



enlarged on a more equitable and democratic basis, it may before long meet its doom. True, it was born of democratic ideals, but the sponsors of the UNO, who are not unwilling to foist their own types of government on other nations, notwithstanding all professions to the contrary, are now ranged on two opposite camps based on different social, political, and economic ideologies. The UNO stands as a helpless spectator today and its executive body—the Security Council—has not been able to eliminate partisan bias, party politics, and diplomacy from its momentous deliberations. Justice, equity, and fair play have found favour more in theory than in practice and the Council has become a veritable battleground for the contending powers, aided by their satellites, to seek to wear out mutual opposition in the name of peace and freedom. It has, therefore, become imperative that some person greater than the sponsors of the League and the UNO, may be an Avatāra, having an inner vision and a deeper grasp of the realities of the world situation, should come forward to take the lead in the matter of bringing about peace and unification of mankind. This is urgent, too, if mankind is to be saved from itself, i.e. from the consequences of the unrestrained moves of its arrogant and blundering ego. He must replace the merely mental and emotional way of approach to a problem that requires a surer instinct, greater tact, and a deeper intuition for its solution. It may well be asked: Is world unity under the existing circumstances at all possible, and, if possible, when and how can it be brought about?

The problem is not a simple one and is not capable of any clear-cut and trenchant solution. There cannot be any categorical 'yes' or 'no' to a difficult and complex question. For, though the task looks extremely difficult, nay, almost impossible, it is not actually so. It is a tremendous task, full of obstacles and difficulties, but it is not altogether impossible of achievement. It involves a total and radical change in human nature and outlook before any real world unity can become operative on earth.

A world unity in the political and economic spheres is the trend of events as we find it today. The discoveries of science have so much reduced space and time that it appears not improbable that in the not very distant future all mankind will live together as members of one family. But there are obstinate difficulties in the way. They arise from the nature of man himself, his utter selfishness—both individual and collective. If this is overcome (as it must be), if man, is to live in peace and harmony with his neighbour, then a unity, both national and international, is not difficult to foresee. But the problem can be tackled only on the basis of the recognition of the innate uniformity of the constitution, need, aim, and purpose of human life all the world over. For, then, all divisions and discords cease and nations can march forward, hand in hand, in a joint endeavour to seek the supreme goal in some vast unity and totality of the Spirit.

As at present constituted, human nature is egoistic to the core. It is moved by ignorant and selfish desires and impulses, by pride, jealousy, ambition, and a host of other motives—possessive, acquisitive, and domineering, which bring it into clash with other egos. This is as much true of the individual as of the mass. Hence is there no peace, individual or collective, in the life of man. World unity can come only when this crude and dangerous ego-sense and selfishness of man are liquidated and replaced by his true self which is the same in all and one with the Supreme Self. It is, then, a spiritual unity, and not any mechanical unity constructed by the mind, that is the basic problem. For, real unity is and can be found in the Spirit, from where it deeply influences the body, mind, and life which are its various forms and instruments of manifestation. When man can sufficiently develop the inner life of the Spirit by which his external life, too, will be governed and moved, then only can there be a real solution to the problem of unity with which the world is faced today.

The work of the Avatara, then, must be to



revitalize man by bringing down the higher spiritual force in order to effect a transfiguration of the earth-life. For, on the basis of an ignorant mind, life, and body—each living in division and disharmony and constantly coming into conflict with its counterparts in other fellow beings,—peace, harmony, and unity, however urgent and desirable for right living, are unthinkable. To expect a change in human life without a change in man's nature is an impossible proposition. Man's nature must change, the dividing and divided mind-nature and life-nature must undergo a complete transformation; his narrow and crude ego-sense must be annulled before he can look forward to live in peace and unity with his fellow men. All his efforts to bring about unity on the basis of his present mind and life have failed and will continue to fail so long as he remains the narrow, selfish, and ignorant human creature that he is. Since mind is incapable by itself of bringing about a change of its own or of the life-nature which is the cause of all life's perturbations and upheavals, a higher power, a greater instrumental dynamis, is needed to transform them. And that power is and can only be spiritual. For, Spirit is a higher power than mind. World unity, then, is basically a spiritual and not a mere mental, vital, or physical problem. Once the essential spiritual unity is discovered and achieved, it can be made to manifest itself in a transformed body, mind, and life of a new and changed humanity. This will be the work of the Avatara. He has to bring down the light and force of the Spirit and effect a change in human consciousness and nature through its transfiguring rays and power. Then only will a real and lasting unity be possible—a unity that has been the dream of poets and philosophers throughout the ages.

What man has hitherto done to bring about world unity has been not only perfunctory but also a failure throughout; for, he has approached the problem from the wrong end and with dubious and selfish motives. Past failures to effect this unity by coercion, suppression, and domination of one nation by

another ought to be a sufficient warning to humanity not to repeat the same mistake in the present or future. Real unity is possible by the recognition of the equality in essence of all humanity, notwithstanding diversities in appearance. All complexes of superiority and arrogance must go from the so-called big and powerful nations. They have to extend a helping hand to the nations that are as yet backward and undeveloped. They ought not to coerce, dominate, or exploit them for their own aggrandizement, as has hitherto been the case all over the world. This has led to worldwide conflicts between not only the strong and the weak, and the oppressor and the oppressed, but also among the different oppressors themselves, with results that have been disastrous for humanity. The world is still suffering from the shocks and consequences of such mad racial or national arrogance and power politics. There should be no room for distrust and intolerance in the dealings between nations. Ideologies may differ, but such differences need not make their coexistence incompatible. A little modification or some alteration here and there in mutual interest, will enable the different ideologies to live and function side by side in peace and amity. Modified and popular forms of the widely prevailing, apparently contradictory, ideologies or isms, shorn of their crudities and violences, can have ample room to live and flourish together in this vast and capacious world. This seems to be the view expressed by Sri Aurobindo in a postscript to his latest publication, *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Truth is one, but there are many facets, many sides, of it, so that a trenchant and exclusive following out of one aspect only need not be the rule. These are simple and understandable things. The difficulty lies in working them out. This is where the ego-nature comes in. It judges everything from its limited standpoint to the exclusion of every other. Hence the world is riddled with clashes, conflicts, collisions, and oppositions of all kinds. It is evident, then, that the root-causes of the malady have to be tackled and elimi-



nated first if unity and not division is to be the guiding principle of life. And the work of the Avatara will be to harmonize the discords and contradictions that seem so fundamental, but are only apparently (and not really) so. The problem of life is essentially a problem of harmony; and once this harmony is discovered in the inner as well as the outer life of both the individual and the nation, peace and unity are sure to follow. The difficulties, as pointed out at the start, are immense, nay, formidable, but they are not insuperable. Where the mind has failed, the Spirit must succeed, because it is a far higher power, a much greater dynamis. Unity is the fundamental note of our nature; the divisions, differences, and discords are all on the surface. The work of the Avatara will be to show us the way to a much larger, deeper, and higher inner existence where peace, harmony, freedom, and unity prevail. A long and arduous preparatory work awaits mankind before world unity can be an accomplished fact. But having regard to the trend of human nature, which is more towards unity than division, we can be hopeful of the eventual outcome. The work of the Avatara will consist in patiently leading mankind to its destined goal through all the trials and struggles, stumblings and failures, and turns and vicissitudes of the journey. In the meantime let us welcome all genuine and sincere efforts for the unification of mankind by political, economic, and other means which may provide a material basis for the spiritual unity which is the real crux of the matter.

The following observations of two master minds of India provide enough food for reflec-

tion to those who are at the helm of present-day world affairs. 'There is a class in Europe', says Swami Vivekananda, 'which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force or government or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better'. Sri Aurobindo observes, 'Spirituality cannot be called upon to deal with life by a non-spiritual method or attempt to cure its ills by the panaceas,—the political, social, or other mechanical remedies,—which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything. The most drastic changes made by these means change nothing; for the old ills exist in a new form; the aspect of the outward environment is altered, but man remains what he was; he is still an ignorant mental being, misusing or not effectively using his knowledge, moved by ego and governed by vital desires and passions and the needs of the body, unspiritual and superficial in his outlook, ignorant of his own self and the forces that drive and move him. . . . Only a spiritual change, an evolution of his being from the superficial mental towards the deeper spiritual consciousness, can make a real and effective difference'.

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"Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the Spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated for ever. Great indeed are the manifestations of muscular power, and marvellous the manifestations of intellect, expressing themselves through machines by the appliances of science; yet, none of these are more potent than the influence which Spirit exerts upon the world."

—Swami Vivekananda



# THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY AS THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCES

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

In this age of class-war and utilitarian economics and power politics, philosophy has receded into the background all over the world and even in India which has always been the home of philosophy. Further, philosophy has become a veritable Cinderella among the subjects of study in our universities. For this state of things philosophy itself has been largely responsible and is only slightly less answerable than modern life. It has been to a considerable extent functioning *in vacuo*. On the one hand it has become unrelated to our day-to-day life, and on the other hand it has cut itself adrift from, and is unrelated to, religion and superlife. It must set itself right before it can set right the times which are very much out of joint. This is a necessary task as much in the interests of the world as in its own interests. For, without its aid, the so-called post-war reconstruction will be a huge waste and a colossal failure. It alone can achieve the miracle of rebuilding our ruined inner and outer life. I shall in this essay try to assess its place in a scheme of values according to essential Indian thought, so that philosophy may know the real place of India in philosophy and India may know the real place of philosophy in India.

The English word 'philosophy' implies love of wisdom. It implies a mood to search for causes and to trace them to their effects and to relate seemingly unrelated things. It may be that divinism dominated philosophy at one time whereas humanism dominates it now. But its essence is a unitive vision of life and superlife. There may be—nay, there is—a diversity, and even a difference, between the Eastern and Western philosophic ideologies. But, after all, the points of agreement between them outweigh the points of disagreement, and in any event the quest is similar and the

purpose of the quest is almost identical. It may be that knowledge is prized by certain types and temperaments more than action, and *vice versa*. But the aim of philosophy at all times and everywhere is a fusion of knowledge and action. Action without knowledge is mere chaotic change. Knowledge without action will be 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void its luminous wings in vain'. Even within the realm of knowledge, physical sciences, social sciences, and spiritual sciences are prone to go their separate ways and to become more and more divorced from one another without the co-ordinating and synthesizing aid of philosophy. Aristotle taught that physics was subordinate to metaphysics and that it was only an application to the province of Nature of principles which stand above and beyond Nature and are reflected and applied in the laws of Nature. But the physical sciences of today have postulated the unknowable (and not the mere Unknown) and have given us such new isms as naturalism, positivism, agnosticism, and atheism. As a modern writer says: 'It is, however, only in the nineteenth century that one sees men beginning to glory in their ignorance—for, to proclaim oneself agnostic means nothing else—and claiming to forbid others any knowledge to which they themselves have no access; and this marked one stage further in the intellectual decline of the West'. He says further: 'By seeking to cut the sciences completely away from any higher principle, under pretext of assuring their independence, the modern conception robs them of all deeper meaning and even of all real interest from the point of view of knowledge, and it can only bring them to a blind alley, enclosing them, as it does, in a hopelessly limited realm'. In fact, even within the realm of the physical sciences, there is



little or no co-ordination and correlation. Specialization has not always led to deepened, broadened, and heightened knowledge, but has often led to the dispersion of the mind in unrelated details and wild guesses and speculations. The silk-worm within the over-woven web of the cocoon often dies inside its own self-made prison. It may be that such specialization enables applied science to increase industrial production and dominate the less industrially advanced nations in the world. But that does not mean or guarantee a higher level of real civilization or a larger measure of human happiness. Further, the claims of the physical sciences to a more solid type of truth are often fantastic, because their conclusions belong only to the realm of tentative hypothesis. There could be, and are, superstitions relating to the realm of 'natural facts' just as there would be, and are, superstitions relating to the realm of what are today dismissed with a high-brow wave of the hand as 'supernatural fictions'. Physics and chemistry culminating in the atomic bomb need not be very vain and proud and need not pat themselves on their own backs. It has been said well that 'modern science, arising out of an arbitrary limitation of knowledge to a particular order, and that the lowest of all, the order of material or sensible reality, has lost all intellectual value through this limitation and the consequences it immediately entails'.

The world suffers today not only from uncorrelated so-called specialized knowledge but suffers even more from uncorrelated life in which there is little or no vision of real values. Uttering the high-sounding words 'realism' and 'humanism', and with a high-brow contempt for such words as 'idealism' and 'divinism', we pursue the path of stark individualism, egoism, hedonism, and materialism. We do not accept any principle of life higher than individual self-assertion. Reason is unduly exalted; emotion is jeered at; and intuition is negated. The so-called metaphysics of today is but a fanciful structure of hypothesis under the name of rationalism. People who talk slightly about God (with a big or

small 'g') stand in awe of Nature (with a big 'N'). Man is the only God, and Reason is His only prophet. Even persons who, like Freud, dabbled in the subconscious stood aloof from the superconscious and doubted or denied its existence. The seen is everything and the temporal order is all in all.

What has all this exaltation of individualism and rationalism led to? It has led to social chaos, economic exploitations, and political muddles and miseries, both in the national and the international spheres. We mouth such fine words as liberty, equality, and fraternity, order and progress, etc., but augment slavery, inequality, and fratricide and have achieved neither order nor progress anywhere in the world. Even such order or progress as exists today is purely on the material plane. The modern tall talk about equality has not lessened, but, on the other hand, only heightened the inequalities of wealth everywhere. Where—even in countries where the modern millennium is supposed to exist—have the inequalities of wealth or the social distinctions and diversities of levels based on material wealth been abolished to any extent? As between peoples and nations there is not even the glib talk of equality which we hear inside the limits of the national territory. Economic exploitation is even more rampant than power politics. Has any one sought to find out why the advance in civilization is accompanied by the advancing perfection of implements of human destruction until we have come to the age of the atomic bomb? In an age like this can we say that there is any guarantee that knowledge will be used for constructive and civilized purposes alone?

Prof. H. J. Laski has said in his work *Faith, Reason, and Civilization*: 'Our victory will be thrown away unless we devote it to great ends'. The fact is that it has already been thrown away. Was not the victory achieved in World War I thrown away? It was confidently asserted at the time of World War I that it would achieve liberation of the human spirit and that consequent on it great art and great philosophy would be born. But



the reality was antipodal to expectation. Laski himself says: 'When one contrasts the years of cynicism and disillusion between the wars with the character of the war years themselves, not even the horror that the war years have brought can prevent the former from seeming, somehow, pitiful by comparison'. We do not know what years of comparative peace are ahead of us today, because there are already Cassandra-like prophecies of World War III.

Nay, while neglecting the divine mysticism of the ancient world, we have almost unconsciously come under the sway of a new but less justifiable mysticism of a strange type. The new 'State mysticism' which makes the State a kind of divinity to which the spirit of man must kowtow is a great inner menace. Regimentation of life is becoming more and more and the value of the human personality is realized and conceded less and less. We find it in most of the nations, even in those that are supposed to have nobler ideals. The human spirit will always chafe under it and stand out for 'the passion of adventure, that eagerness for novelty, that dissatisfaction with the standardized routine, which is the dynamic of all civilized living'.

The task of revaluation of philosophy as a guide to life and superlife is even more important today than it was at any time before in human history. It is easy to denounce the modern age as the Kali Yuga or the 'iron age' or to glorify it as the 'golden age'. But such denunciations and glorifications are mere alternating moods and lead us nowhere. Human life has been and is and will be too complex for such intellectual over-simplifications of it. The centrifugal and the centripetal tendencies have always been at work, though in different degrees and with diverse results. We have referred above to the barrenness of the modern exclusive pursuit of the material sciences. There is little or no attention paid today to the moral and the social sciences. Quite naturally there is no correlation between them and the physical sciences, when there is no correlation among the physical sciences themselves. Under such circumstances it is no wonder that

the spiritual sciences have been totally neglected and that the physical, moral, and social sciences have never been correlated to them to the slightest extent.

It may be said that man has conquered everything outside of himself and has lost everything inside of himself. His mind has become a house divided against itself, and the biblical saying rightly tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand. It has been well pointed out that the main cause of the victory of Christianity over its rivals in the ancient world was that it led 'to the recovery by man of belief in himself'. Laski says: 'The new faith, finally, must have had the power to elevate its votaries to satisfy the moral impulse of man, above all to prevent that sense of frustration which left him with a feeling that he was alone and helpless in a hostile universe he could not hope to change'. The acid test is, what is there to dower us with faith and hope and to counteract and overcome our unbelief and despair and our mutual clashes and conflicts by which we wear each other out? Modern civilization is creaking and threatening to break down by inner rot and external shocks. Is there any means of salvaging it? H. G. Wells thought that the salvaging of civilization could be done by the construction of political utopias. But something deeper and more basic and fundamental is needed and must be found.

It has also been pointed out that 'the greatest feature of the inter-war years has been the organized externalization of pleasures in sport, in dancing, and in the cinema'. If thus humanity is to be a mere pendulum between war and sport,—Byron called man a pendulum between a smile and a tear,—life will not be worth while and there will be no self-recovery at all. What is the use in yearning for hope and happiness while all the time our energies are applied to the production of despair and misery? There is no magic in merely substituting a new set of isms for the old set of isms or shouting lustily a set of new slogans in place of the old slogans. It looks as if we have outlived the superstitions of the



old world only to replace them by the superstitions of the modern world. Man may worship himself today as *Homo sapiens*, but he looks rather like what H. G. Wells called as *Homo stultissimus*.

It is at a time like this that some hand is required to correlate and co-ordinate the sciences and to give unity to the divided mind of today and to bring about a recovery of faith. The hand of philosophy is the only hand which could do it, but its own hand seems to be withered and paralysed because it is divided within itself and has no faith in itself. Its new gospel of pragmatism has made truth a slave of pleasure and utility. Truth itself is defined as what works, i.e. works as the handmaid of man's love of the utilities and pleasures of life. Instead of the useful and the pleasurable (*artha* and *kāma*) being subordinated to the good and the true (*dharma* and *mokṣa*), what we now find in theory and practice is just the opposite. Bergson has said in a mood of explicable bitterness that the intellect is now only 'a tool for making tools'. When means become ends, we can never prevent ends being ignored and lost to the detriment of human welfare and happiness.

There is also the additional feature that even the East is becoming more and more Westernized in soul and that unless the East recovers its true spirit it can do no good to itself or to the West. It is this encroachment of Westernism all over the world that is the real malady of modern civilization. There is here and there some talk about a new orientation. But that is all a mere flower of speech; in the language of the *Gita*: 'The unwise who expatiate upon these flowery words . . .' (II. 42). The stark fact is that philosophy is losing faith in itself and the world is losing faith in it. Philosophical studies have been pushed so far into the background that they are now likely to fall off the edge. In India itself its study has become so unpopular that there are but few colleges where it is taught and even there the number of students seeking to study it is often less than the number of teachers appointed to teach it! There is even the

greater danger of the birth of jejune, devitalized, pseudo-oriental philosophies which will be a mockery of the real oriental philosophic spirit and will do good neither to the orient nor to the occident in the modern era.

That is why we make bold to say that philosophy must recover itself and then help in the self-recovery of the modern world. Prof. Whitehead says in *Adventures of Ideas*: 'The vigour of civilized societies is preserved by the widespread sense that high aims are worth while. Vigorous societies harbour a certain extravagance of objectives, so that men wander beyond the safe provision of personal gratifications. All strong interests easily become impersonal'. It is the secret of such vigour that Indian philosophy must itself attain and must impart like a transfusion of blood into the anaemic dying inner life of the modern world. It is there that we believe that India has a definite mission and a message which will help both philosophy and the modern world.

The basic idea of Indian philosophy is expressed by the word *darśana*, and the phrase *adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām* in the *Gita* and the phrase *ānvīkṣikī-kauśalānām* in Sri Krishna's message to Uddhava in the XI Skandha of the *Bhāgavata*. The word *darśana* implies vision, valuation, and realization of truth as opposed to a mere theory or hypothesis. In regard to the *Gita* passage, Shankaracharya says, *mokṣārthatvāt pradhānamasmi*. Thus the essence of philosophy should be spiritual beatitude. Sridhara describes *ānvīkṣikī* thus: *ātmānātma-viveka vidyā* (the knowledge of the Self and the non-Self). Thus the essential value of philosophy according to the Indian view is its vision of the Eternal amidst the apparent flux and flow of things. That is why it is the science of sciences. Without its co-ordinating power and illuminating vision we would be lost in the labyrinths of the multiplicity of non-eternal things and will not have even a glimpse of the eternal verities of Being. If philosophy stands perplexed at the crossroads of different grades and kinds of Becoming, how can it see or show the principle of unity and synthesis? If, when



it sees the different stresses of egoism and lust, hate and greed in individual, social, national, and international life, it is dumb with perplexity or fear, it is worth but little in life. Subjectively it must universalize the particular and infinitize the finite, because the soul is universal and infinite. Objectively it must sublimate the selfish worldliness of men into work done for the good of Man (*lokasangraha*) and for establishing the reign of God on earth and surrendering the fruits of work to God (*Īśvarārpaṇa*). It must sublimate human life by linking it to the divine and humanize the transcendence of God by the human touch of devotion. It must realize the ideal and idealize the real. It must transmute the silver and iron of Rajas and Tamas into the gold of Sattva.

The essence of philosophy in general and of Indian philosophy in particular has been put thus in a clear and admirable form by Dr. Deussen in *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*: 'For, all philosophy, as contrasted with empirical science, is not content to learn to know objects in their circumstances and surroundings and to investigate their causal connections; but it rather seeks beyond all these to determine their nature, inasmuch as it regards the sum total of empirical reality, with all the explanations offered by the empirical sciences, as something which needs to be further explained; and this solution is found in the principle which it sets forth, and from which it seeks to infer the real nature of things, and their relation. This fact, then, that philosophy has from the earliest times sought to determine a first principle of the universe, proves that it started from a more or less clear consciousness that the entire empirical reality is not the true essence of things, that in Kant's words, it is only appearance and not the thing in itself'.

When the correlation of all the sciences (physical, psychological, social, economic, political, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual) *inter se* and with philosophy as the science of sciences is accomplished, certain supremely valuable and practical consequences are bound to follow for the greater happiness of man and the glory of

God. So far as the physical sciences are concerned, philosophy will enable them to speak with one voice instead of with a babel of voices as now. Further, the modern over-worship of mechanical appliances in this age of mechanization will be reduced and eventually eliminated. The physical sciences have been toying with half-baked truths about the 'descent of man' and the law of competition and struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, and unproved, glibly asserted materialism. Let them remember the other side of the shield—the 'ascent of man', the law of co-operation and fitting of people to survive and struggle for the life of others, and of seeking spiritual values in life.

Similarly in the realm of the psychological sciences, philosophy—especially Indian philosophy—will lessen the terrible tyranny of the mind and of its secret, less-creditable depths. The West unfortunately exalted mind a little too much and never fully separated mind from matter or from Spirit. The East—India in particular—knew the supremacy of mind without forgetting its lowly origin in Prakriti and its three Gunas. Without the touch of philosophy mind will be prone to be vainglorious about itself and 'to bestride this narrow world like a Colossus'. The Indian emphasis on *śama* (mind-control) and *dama* (sense-control) is sane philosophy and is much needed today all over the world. The right relation of the superconscious to the conscious will be that of the father to the son and not that of the tyrant to the slave. But today we are groaning under the tyranny of the subconscious and are likely to lower intellect to the level of instinct instead of raising it to the level of intuition. Philosophy—especially Indian philosophy—will be our best 'friend, philosopher, and guide' in this direction.

In the same way sociology has to get the living, purifying, and co-ordinating touch of philosophy. In the West it has become a kind of self-worship of society; in the East it has become a type of formalism. There is danger today of the fetish of society superseding all individualism and spirituality. We have to



restore the individual, social, and the universal to their proper places in a proper, adequate and complete scheme of life and to see that the social values are harmonized with the super-social values. We must harmonize individual freedom with social interdependence and spiritual joy.

In the field of economic science we have isolated the so-called economic man and placed him in a vacuum where he is almost lifeless. We must save him soon by administering the oxygen of philosophy. Ruskin urged that we have become so absorbed in the pursuit of wealth that we have forgotten the pursuit of welfare. In modern economics there is no looking at the problems of industrial planning, rationalization of production, optimum production, tariffs, currency, etc., from any humanitarian point of view at all. The economic problem is studied with a compartmental mind whereas it is essentially a human problem. Philosophy must bring the human and the divine touch into life's problems, lest the so-called humanism ferment into diabolism.

Ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics—what a unity in trinity and a trinity in unity! And yet man has put asunder what God put together. Philosophy must now put them together again. In the realm of ethical values we have lost the simple life and have complicated our life beyond measure and even degraded it at times. It was philosophy that taught the unity of all life and made us realize that love is the essence of life. The Indian philosophic doctrine of Purushārthas, which shows the interrelatedness of the useful, the beautiful, the good, and the true, must reign in all hearts and shine in all times and climes.

In the realm of aesthetics also we have had aberrations and eccentricities. Art must be the overflow of the soul's spiritual bliss,—which expresses itself equally as *asanga* in ethics, *saundarya* in aesthetics, and *ānanda* in religion.

In the realm of metaphysics too, we have had all sorts of undue emphasis. Nay, philosophy and religion have gone separate ways in the West to the detriment of both. Indian philosophy has till now been saved from such a catastrophe. But such a fate is near enough, if it is not impending or has not already overtaken it. Philosophy that strives to bring about the unity of the sciences and see and show the unity of life cannot fail to see and show the unity of life and superlife. The Indian philosophical doctrines and practical mysticisms of the four Yogas must save modern philosophy from itself and for the world. We hear often of the four freedoms. But without the basic freedom, viz. freedom from ignorance, the other freedoms will not come by wishful thinking.

Such should be the role of philosophy—especially of Indian philosophy—in modern life and thought. Philosophy ought to be proud of such a role. Indian philosophy has to be self-conscious and realize its dignity. It can assimilate the best that has been taught elsewhere, but it must be resolved to be itself. As Mahatma Gandhi has said wisely and well: 'Indian culture is neither Hindu, Islamic, nor any other wholly. It is a fusion of all and essentially Eastern. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar, or a slave'.

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"To thee, who dost not carp, verily shall I now declare this, the most profound knowledge, united with realization, having known which, thou shalt be free from evil.

Of sciences, the highest; of profundities, the deepest; of purifiers, the supreme, is this; realizable by direct perception, endowed with (immense) merit, very easy to perform, and of an imperishable nature . . . knowing which nothing more here remains to be known."

—*Bhagavad Gita*



# THE BURDEN OF EDUCATION

BY B. S. MATHUR

Inaugurating the annual session of a conference of educationists, a well-known educationist and thinker observed:

'I hope you will approach every child as a temple of God. You must preach the spirit of reverence. It is your high privilege and solemn duty to instil in every child feelings of reverence for all that has saved civilization, respect for truth, for age, for the institution to which it belongs, and the country which gave it birth'.

This is a very sacred idea of education. What a grand idea: temple of God! We approach a temple of God with great reverence. The same reverence a teacher must feel when he subjects a child to the experiment of education. The child has a lot inside and that has to come out, that has to pass into its character, so as to give the child a sublime culture which might be helpful in making it a good citizen. In a temple we have associations of sacredness. We feel a reverence for God. Ultimately, as we proceed on our path of sacredness we make a near approach to God. We feel a certain presence of the Great. Similarly, a child has something sacred about it. That sacredness must come out and give a colour of purity and integrity to its life. That is the right sort of education.

But such a thing is possible if teachers insist on regarding their teaching as something sacred. They must lead a life of sacredness, of constant prayer, to reach God. What is their God here? The emergence of the child—that has to be the aim of their constructive efforts. Without this aim and without the necessary and suitable effort their God cannot be reached, they cannot teach the child properly and they cannot help the child to reveal itself in its actions, thoughts, and dreams.

The pupil has to be true to himself, to his country, and to the institution he belongs. He has to show reverence to age and virtue. He has a great and sacred duty to perform. He cannot perform his duty single-handed. He must have the help of teachers ceaselessly. Then only can he do all this, and be a true citizen, ever keen on the establishment of peace in the world. He has to help civilization in its march of progress. The educated youth has the burden of civilization to carry. Not only that. He has to work for its consummation, for its continued flourishing. At present there are many dreadful forces at work that are trying ceaselessly to kill the fruits of generations past. We have advanced from the stage of animals and have come to regard reason as a controlling factor in our journey of life. But that regard is giving way to brute force and there is afoot a tendency to resort to violence for settling issues. This is where politics has taken us to. The great intellectuals are thrown back and the day is for politicians who are busy fulfilling their ambitions. This tide that seems to threaten all of us so dangerously has to be stopped and, in fact, it has to be put back. We have to take to reason and culture.

This is the task of the educated. They come from schools and colleges. They must be properly educated and cultured. They have to evince a steady love for truth in all its manifestations. Then alone will they be in sight of their goal, viz. uplift of the world on the cultural bases.

Teachers too, have to realize their aim. At the moment there is nothing like an effort for this. We have too much of materialism with us. One cannot want materialism to vanish. It cannot and it should not, but it should not shut the light inside us. I say 'inside us' as the light is there but it is not



allowed to come out in consequence of wrong education and ignorance. The light must come out. Our God must speak through our actions and thoughts and dreams. We have to possess that idea of God in us. That will make us aware of the fundamental fact that all of us are equal. Why discriminate?

This is the work of education proper. Hence this call to approach the child as a temple of God.

At the moment there is talk of indiscipline among students. Yes, it is there. But what is it due to? Have we ever thought of it?

Our education is to blame. Our teachers are to blame. They do not give their students a proper atmosphere to develop. The students, as a consequence, think in terms of violence. They look like rebels. We have to handle them properly by giving them the right education. If there is a continuous sublimation of their energies there cannot any more be this problem of indiscipline. This sublimation requires the right type of teachers, real lamp-lighters, who can carry the ideal to its consummation.

A beautiful passage from Rabindranath Tagore sets out an ideal teacher:

'A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform but also inspire. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity'.

Here is a gold mine of experience that will be of tremendous help to our teachers, who

have the charge of educating students to make them good and helpful citizens of the world.

The important thing in teaching is the inspiration that a teacher has to give to his students. A student has all the knowledge inside him, but that knowledge has to manifest. He needs for that an unending inspiration. Naturally, a teacher should himself be a ceaseless student, learning new and larger things, helped by his own mental apparatus. He has also to take the help of his students. Then only will he be in a position to help his own students. His knowledge must go on increasing. Daily and hourly he is coming in contact with new students. He must have a ceaseless curiosity to know his students. Then only can he teach them. Nobody who has ceased to learn can teach anybody. The processes of learning and teaching are to be simultaneous.

Then there ought to be a proper atmosphere for education, where all are learning and teaching,—an atmosphere of give and take. This is to be the prosperous and happy world, a world in an endless joy and peace, in which all seem to teach and learn. There is also the need for co-operation between the teacher and the taught. Then alone will education be a harmony leading to culture and discipline. Then all conflict will be eliminated. The inside and outside for the student will be identical. There will be no question of imposition from outside. It would be perfect freedom, a perfect atmosphere for the perfecting of the individuality. That is the proper aim of education.

Also life will be as designed by God, an expression of divinity in all its manifestations, an ideal thing to love and live.

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"The teacher must throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well. . . . The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else."

—Swami Vivekananda



# PHENOMENOLOGY OF YOGA

BY ANIL KUMAR BANERJI

The Yoga system of Patanjali has for its metaphysical foundation the Sāṅkhya system of Kapila. Sāṅkhya assumes the existence and reality of Puruṣa on the one hand and Prakṛti on the other. A union of the two gives rise to the phenomenal world around us, ourselves included in it. The Sāṅkhya doctrine educes the course of phenomenal experience from the basic reality of pure Consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the principle of objectivity (*prakṛti*). The phenomenal forms develop from the subtle (*sūkṣma*) to the grosser types (*sthūla*) of experience. Yoga retraces the stages of experience that the Sāṅkhya describes in a reverse order. The Sāṅkhya may be said to describe the order of experience-planes from the pure Consciousness to the realm of concrete objects. The problem of Yoga, on the other hand, is to ascend from the level of daily life to the sublimity of pure Consciousness. The Yogic method for this end is a splitting up into different steps of disconnection, or bracketing out of the external world; and thus it assumes a character of graded reduction of the factual diversity to the essential unity. We are aware of a world spread out in space and time. Through sight, touch, hearing, etc., i.e. in the different ways of sensory perception, the world of objects is for us simply there in space and time. In this way we find ourselves at all times set in relation with the world. It is then to this world, the world in which we find ourselves as members, that the manifold of our experiences stands related. Instead of remaining at this standpoint, Yoga attempts to alter the natural relation radically.

The first step in Yoga discipline, then, is to break the contact between the sense-organs and the organs of action on the one hand, and the realm of external objects on the other. This process in fact is implied in the very

definition of Yoga.<sup>1</sup> Chitta always manifests itself in the form of its states known as Vrittis. These Vrittis are the means through which the phenomenal existences reveal themselves to our knowledge or consciousness. It is by means of the Chitta-vrittis that the Self or pure Consciousness becomes aware of objects and enters into relation with the world.<sup>2</sup> The functionings of the Chitta-vrittis produce potencies which, in their turn, cause more potencies; and so the wheel of Samsāra or the realm of objects goes on perpetually.<sup>3</sup> If, therefore, pure Consciousness should be attained, the Chitta-vrittis must be separated from the Self. The aim of Yoga is, thus, to free the Self from the clutches of the Vrittis. Withdrawing the Chitta from its natural experiences, we overcome the influences of the phenomenal experiences, and thus ultimately reach pure Consciousness.

Whenever there is such a cessation of mental modifications, the avenue of the senses is automatically closed, and the mind is emptied of all its contents, of all sensory experiences. The external world has been put out of action. The entire external world, which is continually there for us in space and time, is bracketed out from the Chitta. The world is not denied by this. We do not doubt that it is there, but we use the method of phenomenological reduction, which completely bars the Yogi from any judgment that concerns the spatio-temporal existence. Being thus dissociated from the worldly experiences, the Yogi retains in him only the innate properties of psychic life,—its awareness, its impulses, and the traces of past experiences. For, every mental modification leaves behind it a Samskāra or latent tendency which may manifest itself as a conscious state

<sup>1</sup> *Yoga Sūtra*, I. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, I. 5.



when a proper occasion arises. The Yogi should, therefore, not only arrest the modification but also destroy the dispositions; for these may otherwise sprout out again. It is because of this importance of destroying the dispositions even when the mind has successfully withdrawn itself from the external world, that Yoga stresses the significance of the innate properties of psychic life.

The Manas, which is left alone when it has turned away from the external world, has to be further regulated. The first application of our method of disconnection or suspension or bracketing the physical world has resulted in a pure mentality. The mind, with all its faculties, is living inwardly, and the Yogi has to organize the mind, i.e. the various faculties of the mind, in such a way as to be able to concentrate them harmoniously on one point. This can be accomplished by a persistent culture of the placid states of mind.<sup>4</sup> Vairāgya or a control over the impulses that are directed towards the objects of the external world puts an end to attachment and thus turns the mind inwards, when Abhyāsa or a persistent culture of Viveka-darshana leads it towards pure Consciousness. Chitta is compared by Vyāsa with a river that streams out in two directions—one flowing towards good and the other towards evil. When it makes for freedom and knowledge, it is said to be flowing towards good; when onwards to the world of objects and non-discrimination, it is flowing towards evil.<sup>5</sup> A practice of these two, Vairāgya and Abhyāsa, gives rise to the state of Chitta known as 'Sthiti'<sup>6</sup> where the psyche is existing only with a perpetual flow of Sāttvika-Vritti, unmixed with Rajas and Tamas.<sup>7</sup> Bhāsvatī does not agree with other commentators on this point. He says that at this stage Chitta is free not only from Rajas and Tamas, but all modifications whatsoever.<sup>8</sup> It seems that placid

mental states, assiduously cultivated, seize upon the Chitta so that they inhibit desires that normally seek their fulfilment in aims and objectives that direct experiences reveal and tradition prescribes. The state of Sthiti, then, is a positive acquisition on the one side and a negative process on the other.

The positive phase in which mind has at once reached quiet and concentration, grows into a new plane of consciousness. Consciousness is now devoid of all states and trends. It persists only as a placid state of the psyche, pure and detached.<sup>9</sup> This is known as 'Samprajnāta Samādhi'. It is a state in which the mind is still conscious of some object.<sup>10</sup> It represents a state where the Chitta is single in intent, and which fully illumines a distinct and real object, removes the afflictions, slackens the bonds of Karma, and has for its goal the restraint of all modifications.<sup>11</sup> There is in such a state a union between the knower and the known, in which the knower may be said to know the object because he is it. It is what Husserl calls the immanent perception, when consciousness and its object build up an individual unity, purely set up through experiences peculiar only to this stage.<sup>12</sup> In this perception, the perception and the perceived essentially constitute an unmediated unity, that of a single cogitation. In the language of Bergson, we can say that it is the projection of personality into an object in order to coincide with what is unique and consequently inexpressible in it.<sup>13</sup> This coincidence or the identification of the Self and the Chitta, however, is not possible all of a sudden, but only under the *ekāgra* condition of Chitta, which develops gradually. The object which is contemplated at this state (*ekāgra*) is not the same from the beginning. It has a continuous and systematic development from lower to higher stages. For, Samadhi is not a simple experience, uniform as long as it lasts. It is a succession of mental

<sup>4</sup> *Yoga Sūtra*, I. 13, 14; *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* and *Vāchaspati* to the same.

<sup>5</sup> *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, I. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Bhāsvatī*, I. 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, I. 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Husserl: *Ideas*, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Bergson: *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 11.



states which grow, along with their respective object of contemplation, more and more subtle and deep. Accordingly, on the basis of its objects of contemplation, Samprajnata Samadhi has been divided into four successive stages: (1) At the first, which is called the 'Vitarkānugata',<sup>14</sup> mind still possesses intellectual functions. At this stage the mind is concentrated on some one gross object like the image of God. This is the stage when the mind no doubt becomes one with the object, but together with its name and concept and various relations. Thus a cow will not only appear before the mind with its concept and name, but with other relations and thoughts associated with the cow.<sup>15</sup> (2) The second stage is known as 'Savichāra'. 'Sa' means 'with' and 'Vichāra' means 'intellectual functions of the subject through which arises a knowledge of the finer constituents of objects'.<sup>16</sup> This knowledge comes when the Chitta, withdrawing itself from the gross elements of the objects, sinks deeper and deeper into its finer constituents. The appearance of the thing in its grosser aspect drops off; and the mind having sunk deep with Chitta, identifies itself with the subtle Tanmātras, as a combination of which the object appeared in the first stage. (3) When the object of communion is the senses, and when the Chitta has passed over the previous two stages, the Samadhi is called 'Ānandānugata'. (4) When the object of communion is the subtle cause, the ego, the Samadhi is known as 'Asmitānugata'.

There is, however, a difference of opinion on the nature of the last two kinds of Samadhi, viz. Anandanugata and Asmitanugata. According to Vachaspati, Yoga Sūtra I. 47 suggests that the Samprajnata Samadhi may be divided into three classes, according as their objects of contemplation belong to one or other of the three planes of 'grāhya' (external object), 'grahana' (the senses), and the *grahītṛ* (the ego). So he refers Vitarka and Vichara to the plane of 'grāhya', and Ananda-

nugata to the plane of 'grahana', and Asmitanugata to the plane of 'grahītṛ'. Bhasvati and Vijnāna Bhikshu on the other hand, do not seem to agree with him. Bhikshu, for example, holds that in Anandanugata the object is bliss (*ānanda*) and not the senses. When the Yogi rises to the Vicharanugata stage, there is a great flow of Sattva which produces Ananda (Vijnana Bhikshu, I. 17). According to Bhasvati, it has two phases: (1) A bliss which is produced as a result of the restraining of the senses, and is filled with Sattva. (2) A bliss that arises out of the quiet and placid state of the internal organ. Vijnana Bhikshu, moreover, does not think that in Asmitanugata Samadhi the object is the ego. He thinks that in this stage the object is the concept of Self, which has only the form of ego or 'I'. Bhasvati suggests the same interpretation as that of Vijnana Bhikshu on the first point. He says that in Anandanugata stage, the object is an *ānanda* produced as a result of the steadiness of mind.<sup>17</sup> But he seems to differ from him on the latter problem. Here he suggests that in Asmitanugata the support of consciousness is the ego itself.

Whatever may be the exact nature of the object contemplated at these stages, it is evident that Samprajnata Samadhi as a whole is never absolutely contentless. When the mind is in the Samprajnata state, it is said to be in Vyutthāna, in comparison with the final state. The innate dispositions, the inherited tendencies of the mind, still persist, and the mental personality still pursues a latent course. In spite of Samadhi—a continuous absorption of mind in one point,<sup>18</sup> the factors that lead the mind to the world of things are still present; and there is the risk that the Yogi may be disturbed by their influence in this Samadhi. So there is a need of cultivating such qualities that will help him to remain in that state peacefully.

The Yoga philosophy is careful enough to examine the causes that may bring diversion to the mind of the contemplative Yogi. They, nine in number, are as follows: disease; lack of

<sup>14</sup> Yoga Sūtra, I. 42.

<sup>15</sup> Vyāsa Bhāṣya, I. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Bhasvatī, I. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., I. 1.



determination; doubt in one's own ability; lack of energy and enthusiasm; idleness; false perception; attachment; non-concentration due to doubts in the processes of Yoga; and unsteadiness of mind.<sup>19</sup> All these are due to the diversions (*vikṣepa*) of Chitta. So, in order to overcome these evils the diversions of Chitta must be bracketed in such a way that the Chitta may not be affected by them. A process of constant practice of concentrating on any one object is helpful for this purpose.<sup>20</sup> Vachaspati says that the one object on which the mind should concentrate its attention is Ishvara. Bhoja and Vijnana Bhikshu, however, differ from him and interpret this one object as implying any one desirable object, and not necessarily Ishvara only. Again, a process of continuous contemplation and practice of recital of the syllable 'Om', which is the verbal translation of Brahman, has also been suggested for this purpose.<sup>21</sup> The process of dialectic finally develops a plasticity of consciousness. This is called *Vashikāra*, a state of self-sufficiency and freedom. The psyche thus achieves a freedom to reflect in itself, with equal success, the nature of pure Consciousness, of the act of knowing as also of the object known.<sup>22</sup> This is called the plane of pure cognition or *Samāpatti*.<sup>23</sup> The *Yoga Sūtra* describes four principal stages of such cognition, corresponding to the four stages of *Sabija Samadhi*:

(a) In the first of these, the interval between the word (*śabda*), its meaning (*artha*), and its general significance (*jñāna*) disappears. In other words, in this stage, knowledge is seen to emerge out of a combination of three factors—a sense of externality, the general notion of the thing that is external, and the name to denote that thing. In this form it is called 'discursive apprehension' (*savitarka-samāpatti*).

(b) In the next stage, the name, and the sense of externality disappear; only the meaning or the general notion of the qualities of the

external thing (*tanmātrā*) is present before the consciousness. It is something like what James calls 'pure experience', where there is no sense of any definite 'what' but 'that' (*tanmātrā—tat mātrā*—only that). It, therefore, is called 'non-discursive apprehension'.<sup>24</sup>

(c) When the meaning thus grasped gives rise to concrete phases of experience that distribute themselves in time and space, and in the scheme of cause and effect, it is called 'discriminate insight'.<sup>25</sup> Here the experience is of the *Tanmatras*. The Chitta, having an experience of the *rūpa-tanmātrā*, for example, is not aware of colour as red or blue, etc. but of colour as such. This is a stage of one uniform *Tanmātric* state, when the object is experienced at a particular time and space, as a combination of *Tanmatras*.

(d) When the meanings are apprehended without any reference to time and space, and the scheme of cause and effect, it is called 'non-discursive insight'.

The universal, eternal, and formless *Tanmatras* develop into a stage where they are particular, confined within the limits of time and space, and assume a definite form. To take an analogy: the *Tanmatras* are like the free air and their evolutes are the air in a particular room. Destroy the barrier of the walls of the room, and we get in touch with the air, free from any modification whatsoever. Husserl has almost the same idea when he distinguishes between fact and essence: 'An individual object is not simply and quite generally an individual, a "this there" something unique; but being constituted thus and thus "in itself" has its proper mode of being, its own supply of essential predicables which must qualify it, if other secondary relative determinations are to qualify it also. Thus, for example, every tone in and for itself has an essential nature and at the limit the universal meaning-essence "tone in general"... whatever belongs to the essence of the individual can also belong to another individual, and at the broadest generalities of essential being... delimit

<sup>19</sup> *Yoga Sūtra*, I. 30.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 32.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Bhāsvatī*, I. 44.



“regions” or “categories” of individuals’.<sup>26</sup> Tanmatras, then, are the identity behind the multiplicity. Discursive apprehension represents an experience of some one particular manifestation of the identity, in the realm of multiplicity. Non-discursive apprehension, on the other hand, is an experience achieved at a further step of phenomenological reduction. Disconnecting the factual diversity, the consciousness at this stage has reached the essential identity. Samapatti or the Sabija Samadhi, the principal stages of which we have so far tried to sketch, is thus an experience that carries merely a sense of reference, that in its turn conveys a sense of thing other than pure Consciousness.

This residuum of externality passes away in the course of translation of consciousness into pure inwardness. Over against the natural standpoint, whose correlate is the world, a new standpoint has been achieved, which, in spite of the switching off of the psycho-physical totality of Nature, leaves something over,—the region of pure experience, i.e. the potential experience in its essential form. Thus, instead of living naively in experience, the Yogi performs the phenomenological reduction. In other words, instead of naively carrying out the acts of experiences, the Yogi sets all of them out of action and takes no part in them, and directs his apprehension to pure inwardness. It is this which remains over as the psychological residuum, although the whole world, with all things, creatures, and men, with ourselves included, have been suspended. The Yogi, however, has lost nothing but has reached a higher stage of mental discipline where he develops a clear uninterrupted flow of pure Consciousness which rejects all references to the sense of the object world.<sup>27</sup> It represents a clarity of insight and placidity of inward life. This is called the state of spiritual mastery (Vaishāradya). Experience here is of the nature of a light which illumines the essential nature of things all at once. Vyasa

explains the whole thing thus: ‘The Sattva of Buddhi, the essence of which is light, when freed from obscuration by impurity, has a pellucid steady flow which is not dominated by Rajas and Tamas. When in the super-reflective Samadhi, this clearness arises, the Yogi gains inner calm, and the vision by the flash of insight, which does not pass successively through the serial order and which has as its intended object the thing as it really is.’<sup>28</sup>

When this stage of uninterrupted flow of Consciousness has been achieved and made permanent, experience is of nothing but truth,<sup>29</sup> which is even superior to the total range of all phenomenal experience. This experience, to be sure, should not be thought of as having the same validity as inference and testimony are said to have. Patanjali distinguishes it from them by holding that its object is a concrete reality and not merely a general notion.<sup>30</sup> But in so far as it has a specific entity for its object it has close relation to perception; only the experienced object in this case is too subtle for ordinary perception. So the individual object, whether it belongs to the subtle elements or to the Self, is apprehended only by this concentrated insight. It is, as has been said, ‘seeing with the soul when our bodily eyes are shut’.

This plane of insight, too, like those that precede, gives rise to a new cycle of insights, each of which may leave its traces on the life-history of Consciousness.<sup>31</sup> When once we gain the highest kind of experience, which simultaneously embraces past, present, and future with all their states in one whole, it leads to the ultimate end of our endeavour,—the pure Consciousness. When the progress of the Spirit stops, the sprouting of experience even in this form ceases. And the final stage, that of ‘seedless contemplation’ matures.

We thus see that consciousness and the real being, i.e. the physical world, are in no sense co-ordinate forms of Being. Both of

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* (Dr. Radhakrishnan’s translation).

<sup>29</sup> *Yoga Sūtra*, I. 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 49.

<sup>31</sup> *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, I. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Husserl: *Ideas*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>27</sup> *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, I. 47.



them are indeed being and object, and each has, moreover, its objective determining content; but it is evident that what goes by the name of object and objective determination bears that name only when we speak in terms of logical categories. Between consciousness and the psycho-physically given natural world 'yawns

veritable abyss'. Here a Being which manifests itself perspectively, never giving itself absolutely, is merely contingent and relative to time and space; there is a necessary and absolute Being, fundamentally incapable of being given through appearance and prospective patterns.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The constantly changing and ever challenging world situation is causing no little anxiety to the nations, big and small, who find themselves disunited so soon after the last world war. Mr. Eliot C. Clark of New York visualizes a *New World Synthesis* harmonizing the spiritual wisdom of the East, more especially of India, with the practical dynamism of the West. . . .

Hon'ble Sri Justice S. K. Das of the Patna High Court lucidly summarizes the main features of *Sri Ramakrishna's Message to the Modern World*. . . .

In *Evolution and God*, Dr. Mohan Lal Sethi, D.Sc., of the Punjab Educational Service, makes a brief but illuminating survey of the Vedantic background of the process of Evolution, adducing corroborative data from scientific and other relevant sources. He also makes mention of the various conceptions of God according to the major world religions, with special reference to the theory of Evolution. . . .

*Is World Unity Possible?* Certainly it should be and is, though it may often appear a remote possibility. Sri Jibendra discusses this vital question and pleads for a deeper grasp of the realities of the situation and a saner approach to the problems of peace and unity through a universal revival of spiritual values. . . .

It has rightly been observed that a philosophy unrelated to or unconcerned with life and its multifarious problems is as good as useless to the vast majority of mankind. In India, the cradle of the world's perennial philosophy, the unwarranted cleavage between philosophy and religion is significantly absent, unlike in the West. Indian philosophy is appropriately termed 'Darshana', and its formal speculative and reflective aspects notwithstanding, it essentially interprets the contents of spiritual experience. Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, well-known scholar and writer, impressively clarifies the aim of philosophy by elucidating *The Indian Concept of Philosophy as the Science of Sciences*. . . .

The system of Rāja Yoga, propounded by Patanjali, is one of the most scientific and rational systems of Indian philosophy, fairly widely studied and practised even today. Writing with much erudition and clarity, Prof. Anil Kumar Banerji, M.A., discusses the salient features of the *Phenomenology of Yoga*.

### SERVICE ABOVE SELF

To the modern world, wherein utter selfishness and greed of gain have been on the increase, a thing of utmost importance is the ideal of unselfish service to man—seeing God in him, preached by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Quoting the pregnant saying of Sri Ramakrishna, viz. 'If you want peace of mind, serve others: . . . if you wish to find God, serve man',



Romain Rolland writes: 'If he (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) did not try to detach himself from life, as so many mystics do, to avoid its sufferings, it is because universal love, which was to him a second sight, revealed to him, in a flash, in the presence of human misery, that "Jiva is Shiva",—that the living being is God,—that whoever loves God must unite himself with Him in sufferings, in misery, even in errors and excesses, in the terrible aspect of human nature'.

Once when Swami Turiyananda expressed the desires that his life's ideal was to devote himself exclusively to contemplation and thereby attain Nirvāna, Sri Ramakrishna reproved him for entertaining such a low ideal, saying, 'Bah! How selfishly you talk!'

Swami Vivekananda was even more emphatic when he told a beloved Sannyasin disciple, who had wished to be allowed to practise Sādhānas for his own salvation, 'You will go to hell if you seek your own salvation! Seek the salvation of others if you want to reach the Highest. Kill out the desire for personal Mukti. That is the greatest of all Sadhanas. . . . Work, my children, work with your whole heart and soul. . . . What if you go to hell itself working for others? That is better than winning heaven through self-sought salvation'. The Swami once exclaimed to one of his brother-disciples, 'Put off to the next life the reading of the Vedānta, the practice of meditation! Let this body of today be consecrated to the service of others!'

In the course of his illuminating speech delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Library, Puri, on the occasion of his visit to this Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, Janab Saiyid Fazl Ali, Governor of Orissa, expressed his deep appreciation of the good work being done by the various Centres of the Mission throughout the country and abroad. Much impressed by the Mission's manifold spiritual, cultural, and social activities and paying a glowing tribute to the instructive and elevating ideal of service underlying these activities, he said:

'I want to digress for a while to tell you

that certain questions frequently arise in my mind which altogether baffle me and which have remained unanswered till now. Those questions appear to be simple enough, concerning as they do ourselves and things that surround us. The questions are: What are we, where do we come from, and whither are we going? And, again, what is the purpose of the whole creation that surrounds us—this stupendous creation consisting of numerous planets and stars and suns and our little earth with its mountains and seas and rivers, its vegetable and animal kingdom and millions and millions of human beings? We all perceive that there is some Force behind all that we see, but we do not know what that Force is and what it is leading to. In so far as we human beings are concerned there is a great deal of talk about the freedom of will and of every man shaping his own destiny. That may be true in a limited sense, but when you look at the matter from a higher angle you find that here again there is an inexorable Force which is driving the whole of mankind through various stages of evolution and progress, through cataclysms and revolutions, to some unknown destiny. Some of the religions have left the questions which I have just mentioned unanswered; some have tried to answer them; and sometimes our saints and seers have thrown some light on them by giving us faint glimpses into the great truths that lie hidden from the common man. My questioning mind sometimes poses another question also, which seems to me to be equally baffling and puzzling. I often ask myself as to why there is so much pain and suffering and inequality in this world. This question is forced on one by the sight of the diseased, the maimed, the orphans and widows, and those who are overtaken by sudden calamities and by those who suffer in silence for no fault of theirs. The mystery deepens when we look round to find that it is not the evil-doers who suffer but some of the most virtuous and saintly persons are the worst sufferers.

'The great appeal which the Ramakrishna Mission has made to certain thinking sections



of mankind is due to the fact that the great saint with whose name this Mission is associated and his equally great follower Swami Vivekananda, have, by their teachings, brought us a few steps nearer to the solution of these great mysteries of our existence by elucidating in simple and comprehensive form the highest spiritual truths contained in the Vedas, Vedanta, and the Puranas and have kindled the hope in our minds that it is not altogether beyond our power to get at the ultimate Truth. We know that Swami Vivekananda's mission in life was to make these truths accessible to the common man and this is fully borne out by the following words spoken by him to one of his disciples: "We have to take the whole universe with us to Mukti! We shall set a conflagration in Mahāmāyā's dominions! Then only you will be established in the Eternal Truth. O, what can compare with that Bliss, immeasurable, 'infinite as the skies!' In that state you will be speechless, carried beyond yourself, by seeing your own Self in every being that breathes, and in every atom of the universe. When you realize this, you cannot live in this world without treating everyone with exceeding love and compassion. This is indeed Practical Vedanta".

'I spoke to you a minute ago about the mystery of pain and suffering. It is heartening to see how boldly Swamiji tackles this problem in words which have now become famous: "Look upon every man, woman, and every one as God. You cannot help anyone: you can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord himself, if you have the privilege. . . . The poor and the miserable are for our salvation, so that we may serve the Lord coming in the shape of the diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper, and the sinner"'.

'I have mentioned to you one of the chief reasons why people are attracted by the Ramakrishna Mission. Another reason is that it combines precept and teaching with practice and service, so that we have all begun to know what Swami Vivekananda meant by Practical Vedanta. One of the aims of this

Mission, so we read in its Fifteenth General Report, is to found institutions "where thousands of young men would be provided with the means of attaining their own liberation and of preparing themselves for the service of humanity". That this aim is pursued with all earnestness is apparent from the fact that this Mission has opened numerous educational and charitable institutions in this country and also in foreign countries. As I belong to Banaras I know the good work that the Mission is doing in that town. They have there an indoor hospital which has proved itself to be an institution of great public utility; a refuge for invalid men and women; and a branch outdoor dispensary where numerous patients receive attention and treatment.

'I have not been in Orissa long, but since I have been here I have been carefully studying the needs of the rural people who form the bulk of the population of the State and I find that what they urgently need is more education and more medical relief. I attach more importance to the rural areas, because in every town or district headquarters there are one or more educational institutions and hospitals and dispensaries. It is of course the primary duty of the Government to look after the education and health of all the people, and I know that with the limited resources which the State has at its disposal, it is doing its very best. What it is doing, however, is still far from adequate so far as the people in far-flung areas are concerned. Should these persons then remain uncared for and their needs wholly unattended to? I know how those who are connected with the Ramakrishna Mission will answer this question, because their Master (meaning Swami Vivekananda), speaking of patriotism, has proclaimed to the world: "Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make



you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies?"

'I wish to make these words the basis of my appeal to the Mission and take the liberty of pointing out to them that this poor province furnishes an excellent scope for the humanitarian work for which the Mission is noted. This Mission has a large band of trained devotees whose motto is *service above self* and whose aim in life is to bring light and knowledge to the ignorant and relief to the sufferers'.

Organized voluntary and selfless service is

the *sine qua non* of all progress and welfare. The energies and resources of every individual have to be utilized for not only the spiritual and material advancement of oneself but also the advancement of the welfare of society, the nation, and the world at large. In this context it is of great significance that the Planning Commission should have perceived the need for inaugurating an all-round voluntary welfare organization, the Bharat Sevak Samaj, which will be called upon to concentrate its attention and energy on the solution of the problems of the vast masses of people in general and the rural community in particular. There could be no other ideal of voluntary work than to place true love and service above love of self, with the conviction that sacred and secular are not contradictory but complementary and that service of man is equivalent to worship of God.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE TASK OF PEACE MAKING.** *Published by Visva-Bharati Publishing Department, 6/3, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutta 7. Pages 203. Price Rs. 5.*

One of the notable international gatherings that India had the honour of sponsoring, in the early years of her newly-won independence, was the World Pacifist Meeting held in December 1949, when a large number of distinguished men and women of over thirty different countries met at Santiniketan and Sevagram and held very profitable discussions relating to world peace and potent plans for achieving it. Unlike those politically-minded scholars who propagate the idea of the unification of the world States under one central authority before having anything to do with world peace, the delegates to the Pacifist Meeting were unanimously of the opinion that the psychological transformation of the individual is the first and most essential condition for not only world peace but also world government. The World Pacifist Meeting Committee have done well in arranging to publish the book under review, incorporating the full and complete Reports of the proceedings of the Meeting, as this will enable the entire English-read-

ing public to study and profit by the valuable and useful deliberations and conclusions of this Conference of gifted and well-meaning persons from all walks of life and representing all the five continents.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was the President of the Meeting, has contributed a Foreword to the book, and Horace Alexander, the Chairman of the Meeting, has written the Introduction. As most of the delegates were persons who had worked sincerely for the cause of pacifism in their own countries, the Conference was held in an environment of earnestness, sublime seriousness and responsive co-operation. The contents of the book are, therefore, thought-provoking and deserve to be studied by not only pacifists but also those who would prefer to consider themselves 'non-pacifists'. Messages from such eminent personalities as Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann are reproduced at the beginning. The day-to-day reports of the deliberations of the Conference at Santiniketan and Sevagram form the main portion of Chapter I. Chapter II contains the reports of the two Commissions appointed by the Conference to study the problems of pacifism and world government. There are, in Chapter III, a number of special contributions on



various aspects of pacifism, some of them being from great thinkers and national leaders such as Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, Michael Scott, J. B. Kripalani, Vinoba Bhave, and Richard Gregg. In Appendix I are given some of the Conference prayers taken from the religions of the world.

The book breathes a spirit of human understanding and mutual sympathy. It reflects lofty idealism, a sensitive concern for the cause of human advancement, and a realistic approach to the problem of peace. One can gain much from a perusal of the book, and can realize the importance of and the urgent need for world understanding in this atomic age.

**QUINTESENCE OF GITANJALI.** By C. C. CHATTERJI. Published by Nalanda Publications, Dhannur, Sir P. M. Road, Bombay-1. Pages 52. Price Rs. 2.

How far is a critic justified in tracing the development of an idea or a set purpose through a collection of apparently detached poems particularly when the poet himself does not profess to have any such plan, is a question that may be reasonably asked after a perusal of this unostentatious but thoughtfully conceived small book by Prof. Chatterji. But before we seek an answer to this question, we should know that the author writes about the English version of *Gitanjali*—the well-known collection of poems by Rabindranath Tagore—and that the English *Gitanjali* is not a literal translation of the original Bengali *Gitanjali*, but a collection of translated poems—some, of course, taken from the Bengali *Gitanjali* itself, and quite a good number taken from the poet's other works in Bengali, viz. *Naivedya*, *Kheyā*, and *Gitimālya*. It should also be noted in this connection that these translated poems, strictly speaking, are new poems in senses more than one. In translation they have lost the cadence and melody of the original, but gained, here and there, a new shade of meaning and even a new significance. Keeping all these in view, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion which Prof. Chatterji has drawn for himself, though a little adventitiously. There is, as if, an unconscious design or at least a purposefulness, without any palpable purpose, running as an undercurrent all through these poems. The poet's deliberate choosing of poems from different books gives an added strength to this argument.

Like the lyrics of all the great poets of the world, whose epic imagination had broken forth into thousands of songs, Tagore's poems can be related to one another and to a larger context not only without any injustice to the poet but also for a better understanding of his poetry, without any concession to one's personal predilection.

Prof. Chatterji makes an attempt of this kind in his lucidly written book on *Gitanjali*. Lovers of Tagore will find in this new venture a new point of view which, indeed, makes this little volume both stimulating and valuable.

AMARESH DATTA

**THE FLUTE OF KRISHNA.** By P. A. KRISHNASWAMY. Published by S. P. League, Ltd., P/16-G, Bentinck Street Calcutta. Pages 129. Price Rs. 3.

Purposefulness has never been a bane of art in any age; in our age it rather adds to the value and significance of a work of imagination. If *The Flute of Krishna*—a five-act play—therefore, seeks to convey a message of hope to a world from which faith is fast sliding away, it does not, on that score, lose much as a work of art. But there are other factors by which a literary work can and should be judged.

It is a story of metamorphosis. A young man and woman love each other, and they marry, and then die of an infectious disease which they get from a sick woman they have nursed. But, because of their devotion to each other and to Lord Krishna they are changed after their death,—one into the flute of Krishna and the other into the stick with which Krishna attends to the cows as a cowherd.

In this drama of religious symbolism, there is scope for a display of deep religious enthusiasm and poetic exuberance; but a drama written in a fine poetic style and expressing high and noble sentiments does not necessarily become a successful play. It is true that the world of drama is a world of make-believe, that things might happen there without much regard to actuality. But the world of dramatic illusion has its own laws, peculiar to itself, and as inexorable as the ones that govern the physical world. Such dramas, even if they are designed to be read and witnessed by the religious-minded and the devotedly faithful, cannot afford to ignore the rules of artistic unity. Sri Krishnaswamy's play suffers from this technical defect which is likely to make it unfit for the stage.

Poetic beauty in expression, breadth of imagination, deep and ardent religious fervour are all there. The author shows an admirable power of assimilation,—thoughts and sentiments of English poets and Indian saints have been blended happily all through the book—, skill in his choice of words, and mastery over the language. Hence, though not a dramatic success, the play can by its sheer poetic beauty fascinate readers.

AMARESH DATTA

**THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.** By SWAMI MADHAVATIRTHA. Published by the Vedanta Ashrama, Post Valad (Ahmedabad).



*Prantiya Rly.*), Bombay State. Pages 87. Price Rs. 1-2.

A small book though, it is a book of absorbing interest. The author has not only studied Indian philosophy critically and thoughtfully, but what is more he has studied it in the light of the modern development of the Time-Space concept in Physics. Leaving aside the mathematical side of that question, which is still worrying physicists, he has considered the philosophical aspect of it and has compared it with the very interesting ideas about it to be found in Indian philosophy. There is found very deep and subtle thinking on the question in Indian philosophy, and Swami Madhavatirtha's book should provoke and stimulate those who take interest in Indian philosophy. It is generally the case, very unfortunately, that when the subject is taught in the educational institutions interest is not sought to be aroused in such deeper problems of philosophy. And the result is that when scholars finish their curriculum education they evince little interest in the subject and seldom feel inspired to pursue it.

Though his references are rather brief, the author has given references to various texts and schools of thought, which show the width of his studies and the interest he takes in the subject. The Quantum Theory and the Relativity Theory, though they appear to give simple and satisfactory explanation of several phenomena which were not explained before, have introduced much confusion in the concept of many things; and so even though those theories have been mathematically much developed with skill and ingenuity, their physical significance has been very hard to grasp. This physical significance the author has tried to study by reference to Indian philosophy. The purpose of his writing would be served if his book encourages wider study of the subject than is found today.

J. M. GANGULI

**SRI CHAITANYA (A DRAMA).** BY DILIP KUMAR ROY. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry. Pages 98. Price Rs. 2-4.

*Sri Chaitanya* is a poetic drama, in three acts, which unfolds three significant phases in the life of the great Vaishnava saint—Aspiration, Conflict, and Illumination. Sri Roy is no new comer in the realm of poetry, and despite a few infelicities such as—*mysteried*, *half-inconscient*, *bloom-bursts*, *escapist urge*, etc., and awkwardly prosaic lines such as—

'To answer this I must repeat, my love.

What I hinted at a little while ago

. . . And may I add that this

Our human mind behaves . . .',

he reveals an enviable mastery of dramatic blank

verse. His distinctive thought and style can be seen in lines like the following:

We were not tossed into this our world of pain  
To deepen its gloom with our unending night  
But to transfigure it with the touch of One . .  
Whose Lustre redeems frozen ash with fire  
Whose Flute ever echoes in the heart of rocks . . .

Yet, modern poetic drama has, in general, proved itself unfit for stage representation, and *Sri Chaitanya* is, unfortunately, no exception. The speeches are too long and too often preoccupied with problems of insufficient *dramatic* interest. Also the motives that drive Jagai and Madhai to assault Sri Chaitanya are not substantial enough and therefore unconvincing. The poet has no doubt achieved his own objective in this play, but from the dramatic point of view, the inclusion of the more popular lyrics and songs of Sri Chaitanya and the revelation of their appeal and that of the *bhakti-mārga* to the masses would have perhaps served his purpose better.

A. V. RAO

**THUS SPAKE SRI RAMAKRISHNA.** Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4. Pages 116. Price As. 6.

This neatly printed and well got up brochure, with an excellent tricolour portrait of Sri Ramakrishna on the cover, contains some choice selections from the sublime sayings of the Master, classified under suitable topics such as 'How to realize God', 'Jñāna', 'Bhakti', 'Karma', etc. This pocket-size booklet, also containing a short biographical account of Sri Ramakrishna, will, we are sure, have a warm reception and wide appreciation, similar to its companion volume *Thus Spake Vivekananda* which has been immensely popular among all sections of people.

BENGALI

**PALLI-SANGATHAN.** BY ANIL BARAN RAY. Published by the Gita-prachar Karyalaya, 108/11, Manoharpukur Road, Kalighat, Calcutta—26. Pages 100. Price Re. 1-4.

Here is a booklet from the pen of a deep thinker who has thought much of man and his mission in India and has enshrined his feelings in a number of books. He believes in a particular philosophy of life and has tried to find out ways to solve the colossal problems of the almost morbid rural life of Bengal. The attempt is good; but the ways suggested to his mind do not seem to spring from personal experience gathered from actual 'field-work' carried on silently and scientifically.

The author is wide awake to the realities of the problems and, as a true lover of his motherland, yearns for their solution. But, as he himself



has admitted, the type of social worker who is fit to work out the scheme is 'seldom' to be found—'seldom' because there are some, though very few, already working in the field, and it is the selfless devotion of these few that is contributing to the regeneration of some of the villages which are seen to be progressively gaining their pristine glory. Hence, framers of new schemes will do well to come forward with clear indications as to how best to get and train able and sincere workers for village reconstruction, who will be prepared to devote their whole life for the cause of their mission. Such workers will be full of life and light; and their day-to-day contact with the village people will slowly but surely win the latter's confidence and co-operation. Then they will have no difficulty in procuring the minimum necessary funds for the work of reconstruction.

The whole of India, fallen into the abyss of ignorance, poverty, and partly 'willing' association with inertia and unhygienic habits, is sadly in need of the right type of social workers. But how few indeed are those who are ready to come to her rescue, sacrificing all their personal aspirations! We welcome new schemes of reconstruction and rehabilitation in so far as they awaken ignorant and helpless people to the awareness of the distress they are in and its remedy. But we do welcome all the more, with all our heart, even one 'real' social worker who is imbued with the spirit of true renunciation and service. So long as he is not forthcoming, schemes will have to remain on paper; and when he is there, he will 'make' his own scheme and express the results in action.

S. C. BOSE

**JATIBHEDA.** By RAVINDRA KUMAR SIDDHANTA-SHASTRY. Available from the Author, Village Rani-bari, P. O. Nilam Bazar, Dt. Cachar, Assam. Pages 95. Price Re. 1.

The author has discussed the problem of caste system from several textual points of view and has tried to trace its origin and development from the Vedic age to the present day. The merits of the caste system have been emphasized with quotations from modern thinkers of the East and the West. The author has taken a liberal view of the caste system and suggested reorganization of castes according to merit and fitness, without adhering rigidly to heredity. In the present state of our society, results may not be achieved so easily or quickly as the author hopes, though his views are correct in principle. The book will be appreciated by those who want scriptural support for their liberal views on caste system.

DINESH CHANDRA SHASTRI

**MASTER MAHASHAYER KATHA.** (PART I, SECTION I). By SRI LAVA. Published by Bannerjee Brothers, 14A Kalu Ghosh Lane, Calcutta. Pages 68. Price Re. 1-4.

This booklet contains some lucid conversations of 'M.' (Master Mahashaya), the immortal recorder of Sri Ramakrishna's Gospel. These talks, covering eight days, were held in 1917-1918. The conversations will surely be interesting and instructive to the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna in particular and to spiritual seekers in general. Devotees from far and near used to come daily to Master Mahashaya and enjoy his inspiring conversations on spiritual matters. The author uses a pseudonym. A biographical sketch of 'M.' would have increased the worth of the book.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA. ASANSOL

#### REPORT FOR 1947-49

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Asansol, was started in 1926. The following is a brief report of its work for the three years from 1947 to 1949:

Weekly *Gita* classes were conducted both in the Ashrama and at the Vivekananda Society, Dhanbad. Religious festivals and the birthdays of saints and prophets were observed with special Pujas. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were publicly celebrated with discourses on their life and teachings.

The Ashrama has been carrying on Refugee Relief work since 1946, in collaboration with the Central Relief Committee. The Committee started, in 1949, a hostel—'Vivek-Bhavan'—at Ushagram, meant mainly for refugee students. Other occasional help also was given to students and other deserving persons.

The day-school, which was started in 1939, was developed into a full-fledged High English School with a strength of 408 in 1947, 480 in 1948, and 537 in 1949. Of the students sent up for the Matriculation Examination all the 25 in 1947, 23 out of 26 in 1948, and all the 24 in 1949 came out success-



ful. Weekly religious classes were held for the boys and music was taught to students having special aptitude for it.

The Students' Home run by the Ashrama had 13 students in 1947, 17 in 1948, and 13 in 1949—some of whom were kept free of or at half the charges.

The library and reading-room had 732 books and 8 papers and periodicals in 1947, 954 books and 21 papers and periodicals in 1948, and 1,038 books and 21 papers and periodicals in 1949.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1951

The Charitable Dispensary, conducted by the

Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, came into being in 1925 in order to render service to poor and helpless patients in and around the locality. Ever since, it has had rapid and extensive progress.

During the year under report the Dispensary treated 81,742 cases in all—54,771 in the Allopathic and 26,971 in the Homoeopathic sections,—of which 22,680 were new cases, including 3,189 surgical cases. Also 2,347 injections were administered and 842 minor surgical operations were performed during the period. From the middle of December, milk was distributed free to deserving children and 689 such children were given milk before the close of the year.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, COSSIPORE

The garden-house at 90, Cossipore Road, Calcutta, has been intimately associated with the hallowed memory of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. It was here that he passed the last days of his glorious life with Swami Vivekananda and other disciples. The 'Kalpataru' episode and other such notable incidents of his closing life took place here, and it was here that he finally entered Mahasamadhi. Indeed this garden-house was the place where the Ramakrishna Order had its inception.

It was also here that Sri Ramakrishna passed on his spiritual powers to Swami Vivekananda, and here it was that the illustrious disciples of the Master were inspired to dedicate their lives to the service of the many as well as to their own spiritual illumination. This site is thus an important place of pilgrimage to the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna coming from various parts of the world as also to the religious-minded people of all faiths and is a lasting monument in the cultural history of India.

For these reasons, the authorities of the Belur Math purchased this garden-house in 1946 and have started a Math centre here. They intend to preserve this house as a fitting memorial to Sri Ramakrishna in complete harmony with the great ideals set forth by the Master.

For meeting the recurring expenditure of the centre, a sum of Rs. 500/-, approximately, per month will be required, besides a considerable amount for remodelling the garden-house as it stood when Sri Ramakrishna lived there, together with its setting.

We, therefore, appeal to the generous public of all persuasions for liberal contributions which will be thankfully accepted at the following addresses:

1. The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, P. O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah (West Bengal).

2. The Manager, Ramakrishna Math, 90, Cossipore Road, Calcutta-2.

Belur Math

2. 8. 1952

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,  
General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE DIVINE REVEALER

BY STARSON GOSSE

Allow me to look at thee and pick up a strain,  
From the note of that Unison to which thy mind,  
Attuned at ease, dived deep in the Main

Of that Profundity, which strikes ditty of varied kind—  
Into that sublime One, where leap is in cadence.  
The mystic process of creation seeks its reality  
In various forms; where discord and concordance  
Wait for a greater end, and Truth and Beauty  
Wedded with Harmony lie like a silvery dream  
With a golden edge, which, as realization dawns  
Becomes gold itself—then transformed as does seem.  
Essence reigns on the shining of Time's Lawns.

Man becomes divine; Ah! he by nature is so;  
Why only he, the every atom of the Universe,  
Does bring tiding from the depth of that Glow;  
Nothing remains except thy only given Verse.  
I know this truth through thine minstrelsy,—  
Allow me to get that song and pray to thee.

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## LETTERS OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA\*

Almora,  
21. 7. 1915

Sriman —,

I am very glad to know that you are keeping well. When the body is fit, spiritual practices, remembrance of God, and meditation become easy. Hence one can well realize the meaning of the statement, '*śarīram-ādyam khalu dharma-sāadhanam*' ('The body is indeed the first requisite for spiritual realization'). I am delighted beyond measure to know that nowadays the Lord is making you cultivate deep contemplation (of Him). What more is needed than to think of Him? Everything else is of here (this world) and will remain here itself. If He can be communioned with as one's own, one will achieve one's purpose both here and hereafter. For, relationship with Him is eternal,—not merely for these ten odd years.

You have desired to know (from me) the characteristics of a person who is trying to live and move in a spirit of complete resignation to the Lord. It is very good. But the important thing is to resign oneself to God rather than to know the characteristics of it. In that case the characteristics will manifest of themselves. Yet it is not a bad idea to want to know the characteristics. These characteristics are generally of two kinds: those that are known to oneself only (*sva-samvedya*) and those that may be known by others also (*para-samvedya*). The former, viz. those that one can realize from within oneself, are the best. The latter are those which become apparent to others, so that they may understand by seeing them that the particular individual has attained the highest Knowledge. But there may be mistakes in signs known by others, for, external characteristics may not be genuine and may be due to causes other than the realization of Knowledge. Therefore they are not faultless. But there is no likelihood of error in what is tested by and realized through one's own experience. Hence that is the correct thing. Others cannot know so well as the eater himself can whether his hunger has been appeased or not. For instance, seeing the face flushed, others may understand that the person is angry. This is *para-samvedya* (signs known by others). But misjudgment is possible in this, because, it is not impossible that 'signs of anger' may be manifested without the person being really angry. Those signs may become manifest due to other reasons also. Persons may simulate those characteristics merely for the purpose of showing off. But the person who is angry can doubtless realize for himself whether he is really angry or not. This is *sva-samvedya* (one's own knowledge). However, he may not exhibit these signs. Therefore, the characteristics that one can know for oneself are alone correct and free from error.

The characteristics you have mentioned in your letter are all very good. Once you take refuge in Him, there is no more dependence on any other person, and the feeling of fearlessness spontaneously arises from within. Because, then, His mercy is felt, the fact that He is ever protecting is realized, impure thoughts leave the heart, good thoughts alone arise constantly, and perfect peace reigns supreme within the individual. All these are signs one can know for oneself. Others see that the particular individual is free from worry, is calm, loving towards all, and always contented and cheerful, etc. These are the signs that become apparent to others. There are other characteristics too. . . . May the Lord grant you right understanding and may you be blessed by loving Him. . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

\* Translated from the original Bengali.



Sasiniketan,  
Puri,  
31. 7. 1917

Dear D—,

. . . I am glad to know about the Lord's festival in your home. '*Mama parvānu-modanam*'<sup>1</sup> ('Observance of My festival')—is one of the forms of the practice of Bhakti. Here also the festival of Lord Jagannath is being celebrated and everyone is happy. There are many monasteries at Puri and it is good that there are celebrations in all of them.

But real joy lies in the Bliss of Divinity. And good accrues only if one does not forget this aspect of worship. But usually the contrary comes to happen; instead of service to the Lord it turns out to be service to self! This is a great calamitous sequel to the religion of service. One can be saved only if one is very careful, vigilant, prayerful, and full of the spirit of renunciation. In the immature state, every path is attended with the fear of fall and failure. There is no fear, however, if the love of God deepens. But that intense love can be had in no way except by being wholly unattached to self and selfish considerations. Whichever way you follow, no spiritual practice will be perfectly effective unless egoism, selfishness, and the hankering for sense-enjoyment are banished.

But the devotee of the Lord need have no fear, thanks to the grace of the Lord. If one's attitude is sincere, He helps one to maintain it. Sincerity is the thing necessary; the highest practice is to make speech square with thought. Even if it cannot be achieved all at once, there is no doubt that it can be done by gradual practice. The Lord Himself becomes the helper in this respect. Everybody is helpless without His grace.

*Teṣāmevānukampārtham-aham-ajñānājam tamah,  
Nāsayāmyātma-bhāvastho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā.*<sup>2</sup>

'Out of mere compassion for them, I, abiding in their hearts, destroy the darkness (in them) born of ignorance, by the luminous lamp of knowledge'.

This is the only hope and stay. . . .

SRI TURIYANANDA

<sup>1</sup> *Bhāgavata*, XI. xi. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Gita*, X. 11.

## SACRED AND SECULAR

BY THE EDITOR

'No work is secular. All work is adoration and worship.'—*Swami Vivekananda*

It is common knowledge that human affairs, in the gross, fall broadly into either of two categories—sacred or secular. Men are daily called upon to perform innumerable varieties of action, the majority of which may be called 'secular' and the remaining few 'sacred'. The secular or worldly approach, as contrasted with the sacred or religious approach, has perceptibly characterized the collective thoughts, actions, and institutions of mankind. Though the line of division between the spheres of what is wholly secular and what is purely religious is obscure and often shifting, scientists, politicians, and theologians have



repeatedly sought to emphasize the distinction by supporting the one and opposing the other. Those who uphold religious values discountenance such thoughts and deeds as may be classed 'irreligious'. They call for a renewal of faith and devotion and believe that mankind cannot be saved from the prevailing chaos and imbalance without seriously practising religion in every walk of life. There is, on the other hand, the not insignificant group of people who demand a partial or total abolition of religion in every form of its manifestation. They believe that religion has been instrumental in giving aid and support to the evils of superstition, exploitation, and life-negation. In place of abstract, unscientific beliefs that religion is supposed to engender, they want a militant, scientific secularism, which, they claim, will bring to the door of one and all every material advantage the world can offer.

Man works with various motives. It is a truism that the morality of an action depends on the motive with which one acts. And there can hardly be any work without motive. Some people work for money, others for name and fame, yet others for power, and not a few for attaining heaven after death. Intense activity is the hall-mark of modern civilized life and the *sine qua non* of all progress. The watchword of a typical moderner, bred in the scientific and secular climate of today, is enjoyment, nay, pleasure and comfort of every conceivable description. To this end he would strive heart and soul, believing in making the most out of this world, in 'squeezing the orange dry',—because this world is all that he is sure of. The world is too much with him, and his altruism, if any, finds its culmination in a sort of secular humanism, at best, more theoretical than practical. The pursuit of pleasure on the sense-plane becomes the major premiss of the logic of his life, leading him away from the balanced attitude of mind that could possibly enable him to view life from a higher and more wholesome vantage-ground. By a ceaseless process of indoctrination man comes to a confirmed conclusion that all religion is super-

stition and escapism, that the will to power is often good, and that one has perforce to do things in life that do not transgress the letter of the law but all the same do injure fellow-beings. To the theologian's retort that 'money and power have not made man truly happy', the others shrewdly reply, 'Yes, they may not bring us happiness, but they enable us at least to live comfortably in our misery'.

On the other hand, it is futile to continue to support and preach the dogmatic view of religion, viz. that it is something largely composed of theological beliefs and rituals, and is very much opposed to all that is popularly called scientific, rational, or secular. The religious view-point does not really contradict much less condemn, other healthy and essentially human view-points and the principles and ideals that stem from them. Real religion is realization,—a direct, intimate, and complete experience,—of the Reality that underlies all secular and intellectual knowledge and activity. It could never seek to deny aims and values that may not strictly fall within the rigidly drawn orbit of religion. It is far from true to say that what is sacred or religious is not secular and *vice versa*. The confusion of thought in this respect has given rise to much controversy, misunderstanding, and misfortune in interpersonal as well as international relations. There were no doubt many sincere and faithful believers amongst those who took part in crusades and Jihads, however inconsistent and irrational such wars and expeditions in the name of religion might appear to be today. From a closer study of such conflicts that religion is said to have engendered, one could be left in no doubt that they were in fact more secular than religious. Perhaps a great difference between what is abjectly secular and what is truly sacred lies here, in the means and method of its propagation and achievement. Cohorts and legions are most often needed for acquiring and retaining secular powers and possessions, even at the cost of others. But the spread of real religion and the acquisition of love, understanding, and peace that accrue from spiritual



values could never take place under similar conditions. While religion calls for a strong faith in and unwavering devotion to the ideal one holds dear in life, it has always warned mankind against the danger of such faith and devotion degenerating into bigotry and fanaticism in the hands of ignorant and mistaken zealots.

The precise problem of the modern age is that most people are as passive to religious truths as to secular values. With no clear-cut ideas or practices that can really contribute to their advancement, men in every land are toiling and struggling day after day for something they know not what. A commoner has always to earn his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. Those who are more fortunately placed in life find themselves no nearer the desirable goal they have been ardently cherishing. The problems of men may vary from age to age and from country to country, but they remain as perplexing as ever. If science has solved certain problems, it has at the same time created many more problems. And religion, too, has not succeeded in procuring everything that everybody wants. Though the vast majority of mankind would vote for the retention of religion and in fact actually practise it in hundreds of ways ranging from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, it is but a fraction of his time and energy that an honest hard-working citizen can possibly devote to such practice. The greater part of his attention has to be and is given to secular pursuits. The complexity of political, social, and economic life is growing into unmanageably vast proportions. The confusion of secular norms and ideologies is becoming worse confounded and little do people feel attracted to prayer, meditation, and contemplation. One is reminded of Maeterlinck's pregnant statement: "I want to live my own life", say young girls and young boys, and they live only their death'.

To all who care to notice the patent symptoms of the strange malady that has afflicted modern life, the conviction is slowly but surely growing that a purely secular and bio-

logical view of man is not only inadequate but also ineffectual in making men detest war and love peace. Collective co-operation and mutual understanding among individuals and nations cannot result without a fundamental change of heart and orientation of outlook for the better. The passions and prejudices of men, which have wrought more havoc than the most destructive weapons, are not easily restrained and regulated. The human mind is a complex mechanism and its intricate workings offer no end of instances of the most inhuman urges and tendencies. If, in the name of secularism and scientific humanism, men seek to discard or ignore the deeper supra-logical and super-sensuous values that direct the processes of thought and action, their quest for peace and social stability is likely to end in a fiasco. Beguiled by false slogans of an apparently innocent-looking materialistic philosophy and befooled by a pseudo-ethics that tries hard to cold-shoulder religion, innumerable persons have been brought to the verge of spiritual penury and moral bankruptcy. Having lost mental poise and the courage of conviction, they grope in the dark, oppressed by the incubus of a split personality.

The advocates and sponsors of a secular view of life and the universe, who decry without justification the truly sacred spiritual view, would do well to ask themselves why the religious-minded suffer less, infinitely less, from tensions, conflicts, and fears than those who are not. Why is it that those who do not give proper attention to the development of inward life fail miserably in their efforts to acquire and enjoy even worldly pleasures? How are we to account for the fact of common experience that many who possess everything in plenty—wealth, power, comforts, and material advantages, are constantly assailed by anxiety, apprehension, and restlessness, often of an inexplicable kind? Many become mental patients, and many more, being mentally disturbed and agitated all the time, find that the enjoyment they so much hanker after is nowhere. Hence, even from the practical and utilitarian point of view it



is best to cultivate the spiritual outlook towards life and develop the powers of mental concentration and adaptation.

A vital difference between the secular and sacred attitudes towards life and activity lies in this that while the former makes man more selfish, more distracted, and less humane, the latter transforms his entire personality, in due course, from 'man, the beast' into 'man, the God'. The former, making sense-pleasure the primary objective of life, calls for the abandonment of the worship of God or the practice of spirituality in favour of the deification and adulation of a nation, a group, or even a demagogic individual. The latter, at no time discouraging the pursuit of pleasure or the desire for happiness, teaches 'the everyday application of the love of God and the love of neighbour and the manifestation of divinity that is already in man'. There can be no doubt in discerning minds that the sacred and spiritual outlook excels the secular or materialistic one in every way. This could never mean that everybody who simulates or claims to be a religious person with the spiritual outlook excels those that subscribe to a secular or materialistic philosophy of life. But it does mean that one who practises true religion in every walk of life certainly succeeds in establishing stability and harmony within himself as well as in society.

It is not true either that religion and theocracy have held supreme sway over mankind for long and that secularism has not had a fair trial. History bears ample testimony to the fact that the secularistic and materialistic principles have been tried, tested, and found wanting, more than once in the life of nations, ancient and modern. The whole of the eighteenth and a major part of the nineteenth centuries saw the advent of scientists and philosophers, and of poets and politicians, who sought to explain all things in purely mechanical terms. Their effective protests against dogmatic theology and priestcraft had a sobering influence, though they themselves soon became subject to a new type of intellectual slavery and superstition. As politics

and economics grew more prominent, and everything else,—even the institutions of organized religion,—became subservient to them, faith in the supremacy of Spirit over matter received a rude shock. The scientific mastery of natural forces and the benefits derived from the discoveries of science led people to believe that the secular philosophy of life, originating from a sense of material success and intellectual conceit, was more worth while than what the ancient religions taught. But after two world wars and incessant failures in eliminating aggression and establishing peace, men of light and leading everywhere have been seriously thinking in terms of an all-round spiritual regeneration as the best means of purifying and uniting men's hearts and saving civilization from the consequences of yet another global conflagration.

Work is inevitable in life ; and it is the kind of work we do and how we do it that largely determine our success or failure. A wrong or deleterious attitude to work may not only render it infructuous but also adversely affect our mental and physical condition. A secular attitude, in which the selfish motive is inherent, is never free from an accompanying sense of vague and unknown fear of possible failures or impending calamities. It has at bottom a philosophy of unawareness, which makes work easily appear dreary and disagreeable. Or, at best, it may have a Tāmasika awareness, i.e. an awareness at its lowest level of gross self-interest, which can neither sustain the dwindling hopes of humanity nor inspire resolute and heroic action. Before long man feels that there is either a God or a Higher Power, underlying all existence, immanent as well as transcendent, and that a life devoted to secular ends alone is unsatisfying and insufferable.

Yet, this attitude of secularism, in varying degrees, has been applied in every field of human life-activity, among them science, politics, and education being the most important. Today we often hear of secular science, secular politics, and secular education, and the men concerned with each have sought to



explain it in various ways. In modern times, the governmental administration of a secular State is expected to function in a 'religiously neutral' framework, though the individuals constituting that administration can freely profess and practise their respective religious faiths as private citizens. Similarly, science and education,—education in particular,—have been held to be 'religiously neutral', thereby stating that as religion is the private affair of an individual, it could have no place in science or education which are of universal public interest. Whatever the merits and demerits of such increasingly rigid bifurcation of the 'secular' and the 'religious' fields of human thought and action, it has been aptly expressed even in informed and enlightened circles that 'there is nothing particularly praiseworthy, nothing exclusively civilized, in a non-religious approach to life and its problems'. Many have felt that a method has to be evolved by which a State's administration could remain independent of any official religion and yet discharge its obligation by laying the foundations of lasting religious harmony by imparting the best teachings of all the important religions.

Nor is it a sign of wisdom to concentrate on the teaching of secular subjects alone, however utilitarian, to the exclusion of spiritual truths. This could not be done without disastrous consequences for mankind. The world situation, growing more and more appalling, urgently demands an intense spiritual revival, especially through the medium of education, on a wide basis of ethical and rational rethinking. We need a large number of young men and young women who will truly represent the highest synthesis in their outlook and experience of life and reality. All knowledge is in the Ātman, and the cultivation of spiritual knowledge, which brings promise of a divine perfection to the individual and so fully nourishes his Spirit, is very essential for the better understanding and assimilation of secular knowledge and for the realization of any noble aim. 'Our ignorance of man's nature', observes William McDougall,

'has prevented, and still prevents, the development of all the social sciences'.

From time immemorial India has firmly upheld and adhered to the spiritual rather than the secular attitude. Of the nations of the world, it was the Indian people who exemplified in practice the great Vedantic truth that Religion is One, though religions are many and varied (*Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*). And it was on the soil of India that for the first time was demonstrated the efficacy and lasting benefit of everything that is great and noble in the life of man. Incredible though it appeared to the secular West, India's spiritual energy, expressing itself in a variety of ways and unmistakably animating the minds and hearts of vast numbers in foreign lands, has ever remained undiminished through long periods of her severest trials. The irresistible force of love, the importance of truth and non-violence, and the secret of unselfish service were put to the test and vindicated times without number. By permitting real religion freely to permeate every sphere of life as far as possible and practicable, India has borne witness to the fact that man is in essence a spiritual being and that his highest aim in life is to become divine by realizing the Divine. At the same time, no true historian can say that India's spirituality ever impeded, in the least, the secular welfare and material progress of the country, though there were other more or less obvious causes that did so.

To be *in* the world, but not *of* the world—is the teaching of the great seers. 'To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof'—says the *Gita*. We work at our best when we are free from selfish desires and passions. Ordinarily zest for action flows from a hankering for and expectation of personal gain. But the spiritual attitude to work makes it possible for one to be zestful without being attached to selfish advantages. To right-minded persons there could be nothing 'secular'—meaning thereby something that is manifestly *not* sacred or that is opposed to



real religion (which is realization). To the man of God, to the lover of humanity, the popular dichotomy of 'sacred' and 'secular' is a myth. To him every act is sacred and life itself becomes a spiritual trust which he must fulfil by knowing and realizing his Self. To have and to hold is no less praiseworthy than to renounce and retreat. Science and religion,

reason and revelation, or contemplation and action—in so far as they are genuinely sound, can never come into conflict with each other. Life can be lived at different levels. By attuning our awareness to a higher spiritual note and raising it to the superior level of pure Sattva, all personal and interpersonal conflicts are resolved.

## FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

BY MAKHANLAL MUKHERJI

Bradley, in his well-known essay<sup>1</sup> on 'Faith', argues that 'faith is in some way opposed to knowledge proper, but it is obvious also that faith implies some kind of believing and knowing'.<sup>2</sup> He *excludes* from the meaning of faith 'all knowledge so far as that is grounded in ideas or is verified in facts'.<sup>3</sup> He makes faith 'limited to that ideal region where, apart from faith, doubt is possible. Its positive essence lies in the overcoming or prevention of doubt, actual or possible, as to an idea. And the doubt, further, must be excluded in such a way which cannot in the ordinary sense be called logical. The non-logical overcoming from within of doubt as to an idea, or the similar prevention of doubt appears, so far, to be the general essence of faith'.<sup>4</sup>

He further argues that 'philosophy in a sense must depend upon faith. For we do not rest simply on a datum, on a given fact or a given axiom. On the contrary, we may be said to depend on a principle of action. We seek, that is, a certain kind of satisfaction and we proceed accordingly. In and for philosophy truth in the end is true because I have a certain want and because I act in a certain

manner. The criterion may be said in the last resort to involve my act and choice. And thus in the end truth is not true because it is simply seen or follows logically from what is seen. Further, philosophy in my judgment cannot verify its principle in detail and throughout. If it could do this, faith would be removed, and so far as it does this, faith ceases. But so far as philosophy is condemned to act on an unverified principle, it continues still to rest upon faith'.<sup>5</sup>

According to Bradley, faith, therefore, means an emotional attitude of assent to authority, and its content must be non-rational. But in making faith an exclusive mode of assent, that is, exclusive of the mode of assent that is familiar to us in a theoretical act of judgment, Bradley seems to overlook another very important significance of the term. For, faith not merely implies accepting a person's authority for a truth, but also an attitude of reliance for the fulfilment of a promise, so that the authority in question must in himself show forth evidence of an intrinsic character, relying on which we assent to his authority. It is in the rational expectation of such evidence being fulfilled that doubt also becomes admissible in the domain of faith. Faith is meaningful because we can entertain a contrary idea, at least as a possibility, and so

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Truth and Reality*, Chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.



can entertain a doubt as to the specific nature of its content.<sup>6</sup> The suggestion and resolution of doubt can be rationally motivated in the domain of faith only because its promise of truth is claimed to be based on objective evidence. Otherwise doubt becomes *ex hypothesi* impossible in the domain of faith, if its emphasis were categorically on the non-rational, as Bradley seems to argue. The ordinary notion that faith, by its magic fit, provides a short cut to that region of ideal truth is far from being true. For the way of faith involves a discipline of the intellect which is as arduous and painstaking as that of any scientific procedure. The reason is that faith implies truth of judgment of its own domain, and the method of verification, though not of the same nature as that of scientific verification, has a distinct bearing on its claim to an insight into reality.

Philosophy proceeds on the principle that reality is knowable, and what is more, this knowability is logically intelligible. Here the verification of the principle will lie in the application of the principle to facts of our spontaneous conviction and so far the validity of the principle is indistinguishable from the principle itself. And faith, in so far as it will claim its right of revelation, will have to fall back on the same principle. However, the process of interpretation of the rational and non-rational elements in faith and the inner necessity or self-evidence of their connexion is a problem in itself and can be satisfactorily solved by philosophic considerations alone. Hence it would appear that it is not philosophy that depends on faith, but on the contrary, it is faith which will have to depend on philosophy.

<sup>6</sup> Bradley himself makes this abundantly clear when he writes in criticism of Bain's remark, viz. that 'the infant who has found the way to the mother's breast for food and to her side for warmth, has made progress in the power of faith'. 'Where an idea, suggested by perception or otherwise, cannot be doubted, faith is obviously inapplicable. Faith, in the proper sense, cannot begin until the child is capable of entertaining a contrary idea'. (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

Again, there is at the beginning of every enquiry a stage of accommodation wherein the cognitive worthfulness of the enquiry is taken on trust, until the nature of the evidence brought forward compels us to 'see' the truth as it were, by assuring us of the truth of the evidential ground. This latter stage, the stage of illumination or certitude, may be described as the consummation or fruition of knowledge.

The stage of accommodation, therefore, is the stage of belief and every belief carries with it the promise that the belief is true, for it is as truth that the belief can draw us on in an adventure of discovery and exploration.

Now our attitude at the stage of accommodation in any field of enquiry is always of an interrogative nature, and there can be no departure from this attitude even in the domain of ideal truth, or the domain of faith, so that faith in its true significance cannot exclude knowledge in a speculative sense so far as its claim is to an insight into reality. Indeed, truth as ideal cannot be opposed to truth as real; there cannot be a true 'other' for truth as such.

If, however, we disregard this objective intention of authority in faith, philosophical truth in its turn will become mere speculation and will be an expression of individual temperament in so far as the acceptance of the absolute criterion will be an act of faith in Bradley's sense of the term. And it is undoubted that there is nothing more actively satisfying than this opinionated self-expression of the philosopher. We are thus landed in a predicament which may be thus expressed in the words of Carnap: 'Metaphysical propositions are neither true nor false, because they assert nothing, they contain neither knowledge nor error, they lie completely outside the field of knowledge, of theory, outside the discussion of truth or falsehood. But they are, like laughing, lyrics, and music, expressive. They express not so much temporary feelings as permanent emotional or volitional dispositions. Thus, for instance, a metaphysical system of monism may be an expression of an even,



harmonious mode of life; a dualistic system may be an expression of the emotional state of some one who takes up life as an eternal struggle. . . . The non-theoretical character of metaphysics would not be in itself a defect; all arts have this non-theoretical character without thereby losing their high value for personal as well as social life. The danger lies in the deceptive character of metaphysics; it gives the illusion of knowledge without actually giving any knowledge'.<sup>7</sup>

The position of Carnap arises directly out of his assertion that a value statement is not verifiable in the sense that we cannot deduce from it any proposition about future experiences,—in other words, it is not verifiable in the details of experience. 'A value statement', he remarks, 'is nothing else than a command in a misleading grammatical form. . . . It does not assert anything and can neither be proved nor disproved. . . . From the statement "killing is evil" we cannot deduce any proposition about future experiences. Thus this statement is not verifiable and has no theoretical sense, and the same thing is true of all other value statements'.<sup>8</sup>

Similar seems to be the intention of Bradley here as he holds that the philosophical norm, being not verifiable in the details of our everyday experiences, is a matter of faith, that is, something of extrinsic authority and not something that belongs to it essentially and *a priori*.

But if we understand faith in its significance of objective intention, we realize that the distinction between philosophy and faith is clearly only a matter of emphasis. While the emphasis in faith is on the positive moment of the knowledge of reality, the emphasis in philosophy is on the negative moment of the correction of the unreal which is equally neces-

sary for our knowledge of reality.<sup>9</sup> Again, so far as philosophy is not mere thought, but thought of reality, it implies necessary belief, for thought of an unreal reality is a contradiction in terms. It is with such thought-objects that necessarily imply belief that philosophy will deal; in other words, as we have said, philosophy deals with the spontaneous convictions of men, for instance, the belief in the universe, the belief in the self, and such other necessary beliefs, in order to evaluate them by its own absolute standard. We shall discuss later the significance of necessity in these different kinds of belief. Suffice it here to say that the philosopher deals with thought so far as thought is not empty abstraction but implies necessary belief. And a belief laying claim to truth invites its proof or disproof through some value judgment. A necessary belief, in other words, implies that it ought to be true. It thus involves a promise whose value significance it falls to the lot of philosophy to adjudicate. To confine the term 'knowledge' to beliefs, the truth of which is actually verifiable in experience, and to withhold it from beliefs that aim at ideal truth, by relegating the latter to the limbo of faith, is more or less arbitrary and goes against the direct testimony of all mankind. It is because of this objective constraint, which the ideal truth carries with itself, that the choice of the norm is fundamentally a matter of reflection than a matter of faith with the philosopher. So, in the end, truth with the philosopher is true because it is 'simply seen or follows logically from what is seen'—only, seeing does not mean, as Bradley seems to mean, a sense-conditioned seeing, but rather 'in-seeing', the attitude of reflective consciousness which is the theoretical attitude *par excellence*. Philosophy in its true meaning demands the firm and sure basis of this 'original self-activity', and Husserl

<sup>7</sup> R. Carnap: *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, pp. 29-31; quoted by Helen Woodhouse in her article, 'Language and Moral Philosophy' in *Mind*, No. 186, April 1938.

<sup>8</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Compare: *Na hi asmākam tattvāvedakatvam tadvaṭi tatprakāśakatvam, tadbhinnatvam atattvāvedakatvam, kintu abādhita-viśayatvam, bādhita-viśayatvam ca atattvāvedakatvam; abādhita-viśayatvam ca śraute brahmajñāne eva, na tadbhinnajñāne, tātparyavad-vedatvenaiva tattvāvbodhakatvāt.* (*Advaita-siddhi*, p. 131).



brings out its radical outlook in the following emphatic terms: 'A philosophy with problematic foundations, with paradoxes which arise from the obscurity of the fundamental concepts, is no philosophy; it contradicts its very meaning as philosophy. Philosophy can take root only in radical reflection upon the meaning and possibility of its own scheme. Through such reflection it must, in the very first place and through its own activity, take possession of the absolute ground of pure preconceptual experience, which is its own proper preserve; then, self-active, again, it must create original concepts, adequately adjusted to this ground and so generally utilize for its advance an absolutely transparent method. There can be no unclear, problematic concepts, and no paradoxes (to be subsequently remedied by a belated theory of knowledge)'.<sup>10</sup>

The argument of Helen Woodhouse against the position of Carnap is illuminating in this respect. 'Every intentional communication is both presentative and emotive; and if a rule is given, an assertion is made. . . . If ordinary statements in empirical science are allowed to be presentative, they will be no less presentative when the science has turned normative through the inclusion of the working of some interest within its field. We could have no more solid facts to observe or present than the facts of smooth working and its opposite, of the improvement of some type along intelligible lines or its deterioration. The emotive side of the statement will be complex. It will include the invariable "consider this" (since the interest of directing attention will always be working), and then, because we are expounding norms, there will be the element of rule or hypothetical command, based on the interest whose field we are studying, but which we do not necessarily sponsor'.<sup>11</sup>

Helen Woodhouse further observes that an original lack of sympathy may frequently be the cause of misunderstanding a writer's inten-

tion and Carnap's argument is only a sample of such misunderstanding. 'When it is laid down that metaphysics lies "completely outside the discussion of truth or falsehood" and "gives the illusion of knowledge without giving any knowledge", it seems possible that some such misunderstanding may be playing a part, whether in the commentator's mind or in that of the disputants or in both. The disputants in my view cannot be affirming nothing,<sup>12</sup> though they may in a popular sense be disputing about nothing; if they understood each other they might sometimes find they could agree'.<sup>13</sup>

But we have found that Carnap's argument is more than a mere misunderstanding, and is the direct outcome of his view in respect of value judgment in general. And Bradley's position here is nothing less than the same paradoxical one, only the paradox is veiled in a thin air of agnosticism.

So far, then, we have considered all the arguments that Bradley puts forward in favour of making philosophy dependent on faith; and we have found reasons that incline our conclusion rather to the opposite direction. We have also remarked that Bradley, even in his general meaning of faith, misses a very significant implication of the term which has an inevitable bearing on the concept of philosophy as we understand its method and validity. We conclude, therefore, that the contrast between the practical and the theoretical moments in ideational life, between the fundamental attitude of assent and the theoretical act of thinking is as much inadmissible in the domain of philosophy as in the domain of faith. For, philosophy, in spite of its formal aspect, must have a deep root in man's spiritual experience, and it is speculative or reflective in so far as it tries to interpret the contents of spiritual experience in conceptual terms which are formally absolute.

<sup>12</sup> Remembering always that the intention is the criterion as Helen Woodhouse explains here in a foot-note.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>10</sup> *Ideas*, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 209.



# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

In the month of April 1897, the Holy Mother came to Calcutta and stayed for a short time. She was accommodated in a house specially rented for her at Baghbazar, near the Ganges.

Swami Yogananda<sup>1</sup> was there to look after her comforts, and two others—Dina Maharaj and Krishnalal, the latter an aspirant for monastic life,—used to attend to all domestic affairs such as marketing, etc. It may be noted here that Swami Vivekananda returned to Calcutta from the West and then went to Darjeeling, the well-known hill-station, for a change on medical advice. He had to undergo a tremendous strain on his return to India as he had to grant interviews, talk to hundreds of people, attend receptions and accept addresses of welcome, and deliver lectures all the way from Colombo to Calcutta, halting at different places. Soon after the celebrations of the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, he left Calcutta for Darjeeling, with some of his Gurubhais and young disciples. Mother was then at Jayrāmbāti, her native village.

When the Holy Mother came to Calcutta, it so happened that Swami Vivekananda too had to come back to Calcutta on a flying visit to meet his beloved disciple Maharaja Ajit Singh of Khetri (Rajputana). The Maharaja had come to Calcutta, with some other ruling chiefs of States, all of whom were bound for London, having been invited there to attend the celebrations in connection with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. It was the Maharaja's ardent wish that Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) should accompany him so that the enforced sea voyage and rest may restore him to health. He therefore requested Swamiji to come down to Calcutta so that they might travel together and consult

doctors if necessary. Accordingly Swamiji came from Darjeeling to Calcutta. As soon as Swamiji alighted at the (Sealdah) railway station, he was given a grand reception by the entire Marwari community of Calcutta who had mustered strong there. Swamiji received a welcome address from them. He was warmly received by all the business magnates of the metropolis, who were headed by Maharaja Ajit Singh. Many of them were landholders under the Maharaja and Swamiji was then the honoured guest, as also the venerated preceptor, of the Maharaja. Swamiji was taken directly to the residence of the Maharaja. Next day, in the afternoon, Swamiji and the Maharaja went together to Dakshineswar to visit the Kali temple there and in the evening, on their way back, both of them halted at the Alambazar Math<sup>2</sup> and attended the evening service (*ārātrika*) in the Math shrine dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. They took *prasād* before leaving. Fortunately I had the privilege of being present at both the places during their visit, in the company of Master Mahashaya,<sup>3</sup> the celebrated author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.<sup>4</sup> Next day afternoon, Swamiji, with two young Brahma-charin disciples, came to see the Holy Mother at her place at Baghbazar. I was then seated near Swami Yogananda, listening to his spiritual talks. As soon as Swami Yogananda got the news of Swamiji's arrival, he hastened to receive him. After exchange of mutual greetings, Swamiji asked

<sup>2</sup> The monastery where the Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna stayed prior to the founding of the Belur Math.

<sup>3</sup> Mahendra Nath Gupta, also referred to as 'M.', a leading householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>4</sup> I hope to give a detailed description of this historic event in my *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, to be published in these columns in due course.

<sup>1</sup> One of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.



Swami Yogananda whether the Holy Mother and all the rest of them were doing well. Swami Yogananda replied, 'By the grace of Thākūr (meaning Sri Ramakrishna) we are all doing well here. But how have you been keeping in health at Darjeeling?' As they were talking Swamiji was informed that the Mother was waiting to meet him. At once he went to her directly. We all followed him there.

It was a memorable and historic occasion. All those who had the rare privilege to see this meeting between the Holy Mother and the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, for the first time after the latter's return from the West with laurels of glory and fame, felt an exuberance of joy. Mother stood silently at the door of her own room, wearing her usual veil-like covering. Swamiji prostrated himself before her. It was indeed a heavenly sight to see the world-famous Swami Vivekananda prostrating himself with deep reverence and humility before the Holy Mother, like a devoted son. The Holy Mother, who was deeply moved at the sight of Swamiji after an interval of nearly seven years, stood speechless, as if in a trance. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with indescribable sublimity and divine bliss. In the year 1890, when Swamiji went to her to ask for her blessings before setting out on his intended journey to the Himalayas (for practising Tapasyā) in the company of Swami Akhandananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother had called the latter aside and told him, 'Take special care of him (meaning Swamiji) and keep a keen watch over his health. See that his meals are served in time. As you well know every nook and corner of the hills and forests of the Himalayas, we send him with you confidently. Remember that *he is our all*'. After that, Mother had no occasion to meet Swamiji and so was anxious for news of him. But before Swamiji left the shores of India for America in the year 1893, he wrote to the Holy Mother, asking for her affectionate blessings. Mother, after praying to Sri Ramakrishna, sent her blessings to

Swamiji, heartily wishing the fulfilment of his mission in the West. Since then Mother would always try to keep herself informed of Swamiji's movements and his brilliant success in spreading the Master's message among the peoples of the West. Today, after many years, Swamiji had again come and met the Mother. Naturally she lost herself in a transport of joy and stood like a statue.

When he made Pranāms to Mother, Swamiji did not *touch* her feet, as is often customary. And when he stood up after prostrating to her, he turned to all of us who were standing behind and said in a soft voice, 'Go and prostrate before the Mother, but don't *touch* her feet. She is so gracious, so tender and affectionate that when one *touches* her feet she then readily draws unto and takes upon herself all the misery and suffering of the hapless soul out of her infinite grace and unbounded love and compassion for one and all; thereby she has to suffer herself silently for others' sake. Go slowly one by one and prostrate before her. Pray to her and ask for her blessings from the bottom of your heart, with all sincerity, but without verbal expression. She is ever in a superconscious state and understands everybody's mind'. As directed by Swamiji, all of us, one by one, silently prostrated ourselves before the Mother. Swamiji quietly stood in a corner of the veranda. When we all had finished offering Pranams to Mother, Golāp-Mā<sup>5</sup> broke the silence and addressing Swamiji, on behalf of the Mother, said in a most affectionate tone, 'Mother is eager to know how you have been keeping in health at Darjeeling. Is there much improvement?'

Swamiji: 'Yes, I was much better there. Mahendra Banerji<sup>6</sup> and his accomplished wife very kindly looked after our comforts there. I hope within a short time I will be all right'.

Golap-Ma: 'Mother says that Thakur is

<sup>5</sup> Golap-Ma, a woman disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a loving and intimate companion of the Holy Mother.

<sup>6</sup> A devoted disciple of Swami Vivekananda and a distinguished lawyer of Darjeeling.



always with you. You have still many more things to do for the good of the world'.

Swamiji: 'I see directly, I feel, and I realize that I am a mere instrument of Thakur. Sometimes I am myself surprised how such wonderfully great things are taking place and how in the West men and women are ready to devote their lives to this noble cause and to help me voluntarily in spreading the message of Thakur. I went to America with the blessings of Mother and when I succeeded in moving the people there through my speeches and received tremendous ovation from them I remembered at once the power of Mother's blessings which had worked such a miracle. When I rested in silence, I could clearly perceive that the same divine Power whom Thakur called the "Divine Mother" was guiding me there'.

Conveying Mother's reply, Golap-Ma said: 'Thakur is not separate or different from the Divine Mother. Thakur is doing all these great things through you. You are his chosen disciple and son. He loved you intensely and had predicted before all that you were one day destined to be a distinguished world-teacher'.

Swamiji, speaking with great emotion, said: 'Mother, I want to spread his (meaning Sri Ramakrishna's) message and establish a worthy and enduring organization for the purpose as early as possible. But I feel distressed that I cannot do things as speedily as I wish'.

Now Mother herself spoke in a soft voice, with maternal affection, saying: 'Don't worry about that. What you have done and what you will do will endure for ever. You are born for this work, for this mission. Thousands will look upon you as the enlightened teacher of the world. Rest assured that Thakur will very soon fulfil your desire. You will before long find that your ideas are taking practical shape'.

With prayerful reverence Swamiji said to Mother: 'Bless me, Mother, that I may see my plan of work materialize as quickly as possible. I shall be returning to Darjeeling within a day or two. I came down to Calcutta only at the request of the Raja of Khetri'.

With these words Swamiji took leave of the Holy Mother, after reverently prostrating before her again.

Swamiji then went to meet Swami Yogananda who was standing on the veranda waiting for him. Swamiji asked him, 'How are you, Yogen? I shall be going back to Darjeeling most probably tomorrow'.

Yogananda: 'Swamiji, you are now a Raja's guest and residing in a mansion, surrounded by big merchants. How do you feel there?'

Swamiji: 'Most of them are landholders under the Raja of Khetri. All of them pay high respect to me. I like the Raja of Khetri as he is a noble prince imbued with true Kshatriya spirit. Our country, our nation, now needs this bold Kshatriya spirit—characterized by intrepidity, indomitable energy, and courage. Our people must take to ceaseless Rājasic activities and be able to fight against innumerable odds and mountain-high obstacles. You know, Yogen, I like heroes, I worship them. I hate cowardice—which results from Tāmasic inactivity and idleness. The Raja insisted on my accompanying him to London and I too had a mind to undertake the voyage, but doctors strongly disapproved of my doing so now. They say I should take complete rest. My body may do it, but my mind is always intensely active. As long as I have not put our organization on a solid basis and seen that my ideas are being practically and effectively worked out to the very letter, as long as I have not been able to build a permanent abode for our monastery, with a sanctuary for our *ātmārām*,<sup>7</sup> so long I can know no rest'.

Yogananda: 'What all you say is quite true. But you ought to take some rest at least for the sake of his (Sri Ramakrishna's) work, for the fulfilment of your plan of work as inspired by him and for the sake of the divine mission imposed on you by our Master'.

Swamiji: 'Well, brother, I have no time now to talk about all these things. I have an urgent engagement with the princes and chiefs who are all known to me and who are going to

<sup>7</sup> The sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna.



England on invitation. I won't delay any more. My loving greetings to you'.

With folded hands, Swami Yogananda smilingly replied: 'My love and *sāṣṭāṅga* (humble prostration) to you. Please do take rest as medically advised and also at our request, for the sake of the divine mission you have undertaken to carry out under the command of our Master'.

Swamiji looked at him with loving tenderness and said: 'The Divine Mother knows best how She will work through me. Know it for certain that I am a mere instrument of Her divine will, Her almighty power'. With these words Swamiji took leave and we all saluted him, touching his feet.

It was a striking fact that all the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna used to look upon the Holy Mother as the guide and final authority in arriving at any decision or undertaking any course of action in their life. When any of them wished either to go on a pilgrimage or to practice Tapasya in a secluded place, he would invariably seek the Mother's permission and blessings. As stated earlier, even Swami Vivekananda sought the blessings of the Holy Mother on the eve of his departure for America. Each one of the great direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna never failed to depend on the advice and approval of the Holy Mother in major as well as minor matters. In the course of my long contact and intimate conversations with these direct disciples of the Master, the Gurubhais of this sacred monastic Order, I never missed the unmistakable ring of faith in and reliance on Mother and always found that all of them firmly and sincerely believed in the divinity of the Holy Mother, even as they believed in the divinity of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Yogananda always spoke very highly of the Holy Mother, eloquently describing to us her complete renunciation of all comforts and joys of worldly life even when she was a mere child, her unassuming behaviour and calm and serene temperament, her spotless character, her childlike simplicity and un-

tentative way of life, her unbounded motherly love and sympathetic kindness for all, her deep spiritual realization, and her remarkable power of inspiring and ennobling the minds and hearts of spiritual aspirants. She was as grand as, though less known than, many a spiritual personality depicted in our mythology and history'.

Swami Yogananda also described to us how once he had misunderstood Sri Ramakrishna's sacred relation with the Mother by suspecting him of stealthily visiting the Mother in her room at night. While at Dakshineswar, the Mother used to live in a small room in a separate building known as the 'Nahabat-khāna' (concert house), not far from Sri Ramakrishna's room. One night, seeing Sri Ramakrishna going out of his room towards the Nahabat-khana, Swami Yogananda's suspicions were roused and he followed Sri Ramakrishna cautiously, watching him from behind. But to his utter dismay Swami Yogananda saw that Sri Ramakrishna went past the Nahabat-khana most unconcernedly, without even looking towards the Mother's room, and proceeded further towards the northernmost part of the temple compound where he used to go to answer the call of nature. It was a moonlit night. Swami Yogananda looked closely at the Nahabat-khana and saw the Holy Mother seated in deep meditation even at that hour of the night. He saw the Mother's face beaming with the effulgence of spirituality and divine beauty, as she sat there deeply absorbed, bereft of all outward consciousness. As Swami Yogananda was standing, lost in his thoughts and ashamed of himself for having doubted the purity of a saint like Sri Ramakrishna, he heard the approaching footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna. Immediately Swami Yogananda started hurrying off to his own bed on the northern veranda of the Master's room. But he was surprised to find that Sri Ramakrishna had overtaken him before he could get back to his bed. Sri Ramakrishna understood the whole situation and consoled the embarrassed disciple with the encouraging but forceful words, 'Well done, boy; yes, you should



watch and test a Sādhū by day as well as at night before you confidently accept him'.

As Swami Yogananda began describing this event, his voice became choked with deep emotion. In conclusion he remarked, 'That picture of the Master and the Mother can never fade from my memory. I then realized that both of them were of divine origin and that they had incarnated in human form out of compassion for the devoted millions. They have come among mortals in order to exemplify for our benefit the ideals of purity, holiness, righteousness, unselfish service, and truth. Their love for the lowly, the weak, the humble, and the downtrodden, and their solicitude for the redemption of mankind are beyond compare. They have come to purify the heart of man by removing all doubt and despair, and to inspire him with faith and love, to instil into him lofty spiritual values, and to show him how to live in the world unattached to pleasure and pain and work without selfish attachment to fruits or reward. The Mother, like the Master, leads a very simple life. Her words of guidance and instruction and her message of wisdom are based on her own spiritual experiences, and not borrowed from anybody or taken from any book. Both the Master and the Mother have demonstrated to the world that it is possible to lead a life of purity and simplicity even in the midst of the complex material civilization and environment of the modern age'.

It is quite a new outlook on life. The modern age is an age of science and the contemporary civilization is based on scientific observation, reasoning, and experiment. Nations are now interdependent in many ways and no nation can exist alone severing all connections with its neighbours. But is there any common bond by which men of different types and temperaments, with their age-long traditions and cultures may be united? We cannot find even in this scientific age any common

thread of unity and peace which may bind all together. At present nations are vying with one another to gain power and supremacy. The ideals preached by Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, bid fair to solve this vexed problem. What are needed are simplicity, sincerity, purity of purpose, unselfish love, and self-sacrifice for the good of others. It is the genuine expression of love that can bind men together in spite of the advancement of some and the backwardness of others. Charity, sympathy, and sincere love go a long way in fostering unity and mutual understanding. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother preached this message of hope and love in and through their illustrious lives.

The Holy Mother, though taking active part in performing domestic and social duties, remained constantly absorbed in divine communion, unperturbed by the rubs and worries of life. Whenever I went to have her *darśan*, I found her the same affectionate and gracious Mother, standing before me with a calm and compassionate look, brightened with divine effulgence of the Mother of the universe. Words are too poor to express adequately what one feels in her holy presence.

A significant fact that may be mentioned here is that Swamiji returned to Calcutta from Darjeeling after a few days and soon gave shape to his ideas by inaugurating the Ramakrishna Mission on 1st May 1897, with the blessings of the Holy Mother. The weekly meetings of the Ramakrishna Mission were usually held on Sunday evenings at Balamandir,\* Baghbazar. At several of these meetings, the Holy Mother was present, accompanied by some of her women companions and devotees. Swamiji would often preside over these meetings and would sing many songs, specially when the Holy Mother would be present.

\* The Calcutta residence of Balam Bose, a favourite householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



## “SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE ON”

By KSHITISH CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI

It may be asked: If it is one soul that creates the illusory many, then that soul alone will be the subject of wrong knowledge as well as liberation. But this runs counter to the Shruti text (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, IV.5) that lays down that one soul enjoys pleasure and pain while another renounces all such enjoyments,—clearly implying more than one soul. We can refute this Sāṅkhya view by pointing out that the Shruti here does not suggest the fact of many souls being true. Starting from the apparent fact of plurality of souls (accepted by ignorant men), it proceeds to lay down the conditions of bondage and liberation only, viz. that it is one soul that through identification with matter experiences bondage, and, on its realizing its distinctness from matter, gets emancipated. Plurality appears through a limited vision only, and, as such, constitutes false knowledge. This is borne out by a later Mantra in the same Shruti (VI.11) which clearly establishes the truth of only one soul inhabiting many bodies.

The reason why the commentator Shankaracharya affirms the singularity of the soul abiding in different bodies is that the text first referred to above *indirectly* suggests that the soul is one, which, under different conditions, gets imprisoned in a body, and, later, with the dawn of discriminative knowledge, is happily released; while the second text *directly* affirms the same cardinal truth. The soul is bound through self-arrogation of the three subtle elements, yet undifferentiated,—heat, water, earth,—constituting the cause of mind and coarse matter. It is the same soul that experiences liberation from the bondage of matter when it comes to realize that it is quite distinct from matter which it intertwines and illumines. The second text directly refutes the erroneous conception of many souls entertained by the materialist Sāṅkhya.

It may be further asked: What harm is there if the *Śvetāśvatara* Mantra is interpreted as implying many souls? To this the reply is: If the imprisoned soul is regarded as different from the soul set free, it must be admitted that the characterizing mark of the indiscreet soul is different from that of the discerning soul. But this characteristic mark, composed of the three principal subtle elements, without any beginning, has been set down in the text in the singular number.

If it is still contended that the limiting adjunct of the indiscreet soul that persists only until discrimination dawns must be different from the adjunct of subtle matter recently sublated by the knowledge of the discerning soul,—we can reply by pointing out that it is one and the same undifferentiated subtle matter that first forms the object of enjoyment as the result of egotism, but is finally discarded on the dawn of discrimination. It is one soul that was falsely enamoured of matter and has now grown dispassionate towards it due to the attainment of right knowledge; or there will be discontinuity through the dropping of the original subject. On all these grounds, we may say that the text has been rightly interpreted by Shankara as confirming the doctrine of the One Soul.

It may be urged that bondage and liberation are possible only when there are a number of souls with differing proprium—i.e. many individual souls, who may be regarded as: (a) the Supreme Being, bounded by certain limits (*avacchinna Brahma*), or (b) portions of the Absolute Spirit (*Brahmāmśa*) or (c) reflections (in the mind, etc.) of the all-pervading Divine Soul (*Brahma-pratibimba*). If, on the contrary, there is only one soul, both bondage and liberation cannot be predicated of one entity.

We can rejoin by pointing out that free-



dom and bondage can apply only to one soul, as—

(1) The Absolute Spirit, which has no limbs or members, cannot be enclosed even by the threefold (cosmic) vestures superimposed upon it. The terminus or ultimate referent of thought cannot be divided into finite, personal gods even, like Virāt and Hiranyagarbha; and

(2) there will be futility of spiritual efforts put forth by *one* soul, and sudden success attained by *another* soul.

According to the *Brahma Sūtra* (II. iii. 29) also the soul in man is all-pervading, because the all-pervading Brahman itself is stated to have entered the universe as the individual soul (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II. vi), which, again, is stated to be identical with it. How is it then said to be atomic? Because of its imagined association with the intellect and abiding in bondage. It is like imagining the all-pervading Lord as limited for the sake of divine meditation.

The Self (in the state of ignorance) creates the universe, which is essentially alien to its own nature. The identity of the Self with the individualized soul, then, rests on a wrong judgment of its real nature. There is another identification which rests on a right judgment of the nature of the all-pervading Self and the individual soul (Shankara's *Vākya-vṛtti*, 39, 40). When, as a result, the individual soul attains supreme knowledge, it again becomes identical with the Absolute Spirit.

This is in direct conflict with the three theories—that the soul is—

(a) a portion of the Supreme Self; or

(b) a reflection of it in Avidyā or the mind; or

(c) the Supreme Self encompassed by certain limits.

A part can never be said to possess the same magnitude as the whole. 'If the individual soul is no other than the Supreme Self, then the former must also be as much in size as the latter. The Vedas declare the Supreme Self to be all-pervading; therefore the indivi-

dual soul also is all-pervading'. (Shankara's commentary on *Brahma Sūtra*, II. iii. 29).

It cannot be objected that the term 'individual soul' must be taken to imply a secondary meaning; for then the same term must be said to be used in one sense in the refutation part, and in another (i.e., primary sense) in the objection part—which cannot be the case. Moreover, the decision of the one soul is in perfect harmony with scriptural texts like *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. vi, and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iii. 7 and IV. iv. 22—all of which pronounce the individual soul to be all-pervading. An argument for the metaphysical senses of *tvam* and *tat* for the purpose of their identity stands contradicted by *Sūta-samhitā*, II. viii. 42. The Absolute Spirit continues to have the same magnitude even after the imagined assumption of individuality, as it had before entering the universe.

Thus it stands proved that it is one soul that, having been first bound by ignorance of its real nature, becomes liberated when illusory distinctions between it and other individuals on the one hand and between it and the divine Creator on the other disappear (together with their parent—*ajñāna*) through the certain knowledge that it is the all-pervading Soul (as there are no individual souls, or creative God other than its plenary Self). The popular point of view that 'some persons other than myself have been released from bondage, while I still continue in ignorance of my real nature', is not accepted by the wise, as it does not point to the right procedure regarding the attainment of liberation. An inwardized mind is a pre-condition of Self-knowledge; while the popular view tends to scatter the mind outwards to the false, fleeting show of many individual souls.

#### AUTHORITIES CITED

A. On this point there is concurrence of the *Brahma Gita* (*Sūta-samhitā*, III. iv. 47). To remove a possible distrust regarding the fact of one soul uniformly abiding in one's own body as well as in other bodies, and thus finalize the indisputable truth of the singularity



of soul, Brahmā here tells the gods that just as the beholder of a dream (the soul that conjures up a dream, not a tiny creature belonging to the dream-world and fashioned by the beholder), though himself only one, shines through ignorance as many comprising disciple, preceptor, etc., so also in waking life only one soul, known as the empirical ego (*viññānamaya-jīva*), itself appears through mistake as many individual souls, characterized as: 'I am bound', 'this is liberated', 'he is great', 'this is learned', 'he is ignorant', etc.

If it is asked: What do we gain by admitting (as suggested above) that there is no distinction between the empirical ego and the many individuals that it visualizes to itself, Brahmā continues to tell the gods that like unto the dreaming soul (*taijasa-jīva*), who, as the shaper of the dream, is not different from the many apparent individuals composing the dream-world, the empirical knower in waking life (*viññānamaya*), through his own ignorance, knows the many individuals of this world as bound; but on himself attaining to inner light knows them all to be liberated (*Sūta-samhitā*, III. iv. 48-49). The individuals of waking life are imaginative projections of the one soul (*prājña*) that produces and permeates them. The real nature of the empirical knower (*viññānamaya*) also is this spiritual principle (*prājña*) that inspirits his individualized being. The show of individual men and things, including his own (externalized) body, visual to him, is an illusion. The one soul (*prājña*) alone constitutes reality. He who, on waking up to his real nature of eternal life and light, finds others (who are varying shadows of himself and possess no mind of their own) also to be unquestionably free is the best knower of Truth (*ātma-vid-vara*).

It may be asked: Why is it that Brahmā declares the imagining soul to be the reality, while the individual souls imagined by him to be mere appearances of reality? The reply is: The permanent, self-shining Principle is what is meant by the word 'I', while an individual, externalized by the seeing Self, is a shadow of this reality. Whatever forms an

object of perception or introspection (*pramātr-vedya* or *sākṣī-bhāṣya* respectively) constitutes an appearance of this reality. The innermost, self-shining 'I' i.e. the 'I' principle surrounded by sleep or ignorance of its true nature is known as *prājña*, which is the spiritual witness persisting through all changing states of experience, superimposed upon it in ignorance, but with which it feels no self-arrogation (*tādātmyādhyāsa*). On the removal of ignorance by spiritual vision, this *prājña* becomes the *turiya ātmā*. What constitutes the 'I' is the Conscious Principle; the individuals that it knows are in themselves really un-conscious. Their visible persons have only a semblance of reality. The *prājña* or one soul persists through all states of experience. Essentially, therefore, the *viññānamaya* or empirical knower is not different from *prājña*.

Another difficulty still confronts us: If the one soul is liberated through Self-knowledge, ignorance cannot again arise and bind the soul, so that all other individuals of the world must get liberated without their own efforts.

To this the reply is: It has been shown before that bondage and liberation can apply to one soul only, they having no meaning in relation to *apparent* individuals. Every individual soul, however, may constitute the inmost 'I' shining by its own light; it thus can attain liberation through its own Self-knowledge, and in this liberated state it will find other individuals—mere reflections of itself—to be doubtlessly delivered from bondage. Every individual soul thus will experience worldly bondage till it comes by supreme knowledge. Brahmā thus prefers the doctrine of one soul to that of many souls.

B. Gaudapada also concurs with the same view in his *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā* (Ch. IV, verses 63-66). The variety of individual beings seen in a dream have no existence apart from the mind of the dreamer. This mind of the dreamer is admittedly an object of perception on the part of the dreamer (*taijasa-jīva*) only. Thus, the mind of the dreamer



has no separate entity from the dreamer himself.

Again, the various individual beings seen in waking life are only objects of the mind of the waking man (the empirical knower or *viññānamaya*); they are thus not apart from the waking mind. This his waking mind is an object of perception of the waking man only. Thus the mind has no separate existence from the perceiver (*viññānamaya*).

Thus, according to the above verses, the various individuals that the soul imagines in dream or waking state (through which it passes) have no existence apart from the modifications of the mind. Therefore, these individual beings that are projected by the one soul in dream or waking state—being composed only of mental modifications—are reflections of the one real Being, the inmost 'I'. Like a painted garment, which looks like a garment without being really so, these individual souls appear like living beings (i.e., endowed with sentience and feeling), but in reality they have no consciousness of their own. Thus the Principle of Consciousness—inwardly shining and being felt as the 'I'—is the only One Soul. This also is another authoritative proof of the doctrine of One Soul.

C. Sri Krishna also confirms the same doctrine in the *Gita* (Ch. XIII, verses 1 and 26). The Conscious Principle that lights up or reveals the aggregate (such as the mind, etc.) called the body or habitation, is known as the overseeing soul. This intelligent principle, through lack of discrimination of its real nature, gets identified with the non-intelligent habitation, and becomes the conceiver (*kalpaka*) of various individual beings, who are really devoid of consciousness. Thus the one intelligent principle only, according to Sri Krishna also, is the object of bondage and liberation.

D. *Brahma Gita* (V.34) sums up the purport of the sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, beginning with '*sadeva somyedam*' and ending with '*tattejo'srjata*', which lays down that it is only one soul associated with original ignorance (*mūla-ajñāna*) that proves

to be the creator of the world. This verse in *Brahma Gita* says that an external divine Creator, who has to reckon upon the antecedent actions of individuals to be created, cannot be said to be indiscriminate and thus participate in false knowledge (*ajñāna*), as He does His work with full discrimination of preceding deeds of individuals. Therefore, it is only one soul, referred to in the Shruti text '*sadeva somyedam*', that is mentioned in the *Brahma Gita* (V. 34) as the creator of the universe: this one soul, that had existed before creation, now created heat (*tattejo'srjata*). This also establishes the doctrine of One Soul as being the import of the Shrutis.

E. The same doctrine is also countenanced by the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* as is clear from two Sutras of *Brahma Sūtra* (III. iii. 16 and 17). The purport of these two Sutras is this: In '*sadeva somyedam*' ('verily, there was only one reality in the beginning'), the word '*sat*' refers to the Supreme Self (not Hiranyagarbha), even as in the question of Janaka to Yājñavalkya (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iii. 7), viz. *katama ātmā*,—the word '*self*' is taken to mean the infinite entity that is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs—the self-effulgent Light within the heart (intellect). Why? Because of the suggestion of identity (*tādātmya*) between *sat* and *ātmā*. If it is contended that the word '*ātmā*' (self) has not been used at the beginning of the text (*upakrama*), we reply that in spite of it, the identity between *sat* and *ātmā* must be admitted in view of the definite statement (*avadhāraṇā*),—'*yenāśrutam śrutam bhavati*' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. i. 3), as a means of proving which wonderful revelation '*sadeva*' text (VI. ii. 1) has been introduced. If *sat* is not taken to mean the one Supreme Self,—if the innermost, intelligent 'I' is not taken to be the real creator (the first cause) of the universe,—then, by knowing the One everything cannot be known.

Moreover, (a) the certain existence of one reality (*sat*) before creation; (b) the fact of the one spiritual principle (*sat devatā*) enter-



ing the created universe as an individual soul (empirical subject or *viññānamaya*); (c) the fact of the unification or merger of the *viññānamaya* at the time of deep sleep with *prājña*, i.e. *ānandamaya* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. viii. 1)—the attainment by the individual subject at the time of sound sleep of his own inalienable status of subjectivity and plenary peace (though still shrouded by a thin film of ignorance); and finally (d) the repeated directing of the disciple to the experience of his assured identity with the Supreme Self (*tat-tvam-asi*) (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. viii. 7, etc.),—(all this) stands justified only when the *sat* is regarded as the one Supreme Self (*ātmā*).

The existent reality (*sat*), the cause of creation, must be admitted to be the inner (individual) self (*ātmā*), for, if it were different from the knowing subject,—if the inner self (*mukhya ātmā*) were not the cause of creation,—then, by knowing the One (*eka viññānena*) he cannot claim omniscience (*sarva-viññāna*) which is an intuitive experience of the unity of the subject and object of knowledge. Thus it must be admitted that it is the One Subject, which, impelled by latent ignorance, objectifies itself into the appearance of a creation.

Before the appearance of many there was only One (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. ii. 1).

This self-shining reality conceives itself (*ātmanā*) to be the individual self (*anena jīvena*) (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. iii. 2). This empirical subject again is one which, at sound sleep, merges into its original subjectivity (though with the germ of subject-object relation imbedded in it)—*satā somya tadā sampanno bhavati svapīto bhavati* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. viii. 1). This state also, though revealing the Unconscious, comes short of the genuine Reality; the individual subject, therefore, is repeatedly reminded of its true, transcendental nature, beyond even the plane of introspection (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI. viii. 7, etc.).

This is the gist of Shankara's commentary which has been summed up by Vidyāranya in his *Adhikaraṇa-Ratna-Mālā*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus there is a perfect correspondence between the Conscious Reality in the commentary of Shankara (with its bearing upon *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*) and the Blissful Principle suggested in the verse from *Brahma Gita* (referred to in D, above, with its bearing on the sixth chapter of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*). Both of them signify that it is the One Soul, with the thin vestige of the many (existing like the underlying writing of a palimpsest), that sends forth the world.

<sup>1</sup> Ānandāshrama, Poona Edn., page 103.

## TOWARDS ONE WORLD

BY BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

### THE CALL OF THE HIGHEST UNITY

The pursuit of larger integrations alone contents the progressive soul of Man. East and West are at one in this realization. The impulse to see life as a whole is innate in man. 'In smallness lies no Bliss, but in immensity only'—is the Upanishadic dictum. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish', says the

*Book of Proverbs*. This urge has led man today, in his relations with his kind, to a point where he stands face to face with the highest idea. It is the concept of Humanity as a whole, a single family, regulating life on the broadest political and economic basis, on the enduring principles of peace, equality, and co-operation. Thinking in terms of mass-psycho-



logy and mass-welfare, he is now up against a problem no longer remote and speculative but hourly more insistent and practical—viz. How to be happy all together? And the sum of wisdom which through the ages he has been laying up and the attributes in which he has sought distinction for himself above all other species will now be taxed to the utmost and put to a crucial test in the attempt to make the globe a fitter home for united mankind.

### A NEW PROBLEM

History is the tale of man's exploration of the two subjects of perennial interest and unlimited content: His self and the world. His knowledge of self has grown with his increasing contact and sharpening conflict with his environment—both physical and human. With every step in advance wider horizons have opened to his view. In the new phase of his existence he finds that his discovery—neither of his own nature nor of his environment—is yet at an end. And the problem of happy and harmonious living for all—although it has confronted him on an enlarging scale through the sixty centuries of civilization—has now assumed complexities and dimensions which almost make it different in kind and quality from all that preceded it.

### THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

But whatever the intricacy and magnitude of the problem, the lamp which is to light man's path onward is the experience of the past. The lessons of history about the birth, growth, and decline of societies, the rise and fall, the aims, courses, and motives of civilizations, in so far as they apply to present conditions, merit close attention. For, history is never annulled, though it may not repeat itself. Science, it has been said, is a series of judgments revised without cessation. The process is the same wherever truth is assayed and the circle of knowledge widened. The basic facts and the cardinal truths about human nature and the testimony of history as to racial survival and the aims and aspirations of civilization need, therefore, to be gleaned not out

of a passing curiosity but in so far as they have their permanent value.

### AGES OF SUB-HUMANITY

The last five or six thousand years in world history are no more than a speck in the moving expanse of Time. Scientific estimates compute the age of the earth to be 2,000 million years. And although it has been the habitat of life for 300 million years, man's appearance on it is dated about 300,000 years ago. As a brute or a savage or a barbarian, therefore, he roamed on earth for about 295,000 years and he has been emerging from sub-humanity to the state of humanity during this last inappreciable period.

### THE UNRECKONED DEAD AND THE FEW LIVING SOCIETIES

In every nation or country it is obvious the dead are ever in the majority; they far outnumber the living members. This seems to be true about races and States as well. Those of the past, which have faded into unknown and nameless oblivion, are without reckoning. And those that history and prehistory have been able to trace must have been more numerous than the survivors which have emerged into the living present. Historians reckon the distinct types of civilization, which emerged during the last six thousand years, as twenty-one. The living societies of today, which feel in them the urge and aspiration to struggle and survive and fashion or preserve distinctive life-patterns, are marked off into between sixty and seventy States. But as the embodiments and depositories of broadly differing cultures they are six: viz. Western Christian, Orthodox Christian (in its two divisions—the main body and the Russian), Islamic, Indic, Sinic, and Far Eastern (the main body and the Koreo-Japanese).

### SIX LIVE CIVILIZATIONS AND THE DECAYING MANY

This sixfold division of a species that comprises 2,200 millions and peoples an entire globe must suffer from the inevitable defects of terming in the gross what is far from simple



—a vast variety of races and colours, cults and faiths, modes and motives of life. There are, besides, the arrested or decaying limbs. In 1915, anthropologists listed 650 primitive societies. But each of the six living civilizations embraces a larger aggregate than all the primitive societies that have so far risen to view. Leaving aside for the present the potentialities that in the modern world backward races may exhibit under favourable nurture and with a shift in their political and economic set-up and ideological background, the races of Africa—called the nation of the unemployed—and the thinning survivors of American aborigines, as also Negroes—victims of nearness to superior races—are not generally credited with creative contributions to civilization. Nil is the measure of their achievement in furthering the onward march of mankind.

#### THE FADED FIFTEEN

The six living societies first named are, so to say, the heirs of the ages, and from ancient and extinct races to them has descended the varied cultural heritage of which history is the exciting record. The once living civilizations, which have now faded away, are counted as fifteen. Four of these—Andean, Mayan, Yucatec, and Mexic—belonged to the two Americas and were the contribution of the Red races. The archaic civilizations—Egyptiac, Minoan, Syriac, and Arabic—were evolved by the Whites of the Mediterranean group. Sumeric, Hittite, and Iranic were contributed by the Whites of the Alpine variety. To the account of the Nordic Whites is set down Hellenism, the voice of which—though dead in its original form—still cries from the grave and was the chief source and ingredient of Western civilization.

#### ILLUSION OF DATA

But this summary enumeration of the major civilizations of the past and the present suffers from the defects inherent in every attempt at a simplified statement of what is in its very nature vast, infinitely complex, and at best imperfectly known—the March of

Humanity through the ages. Historical importance, the division into major and minor, is often determined by the available data and is accidental. When collective happiness, the substance of culture, essentials of life, and life's indispensable apparatus are considered along with the changes of fortune that may overtake the imposing civilizations of today in the aeons which lie ahead, these estimates partake of the nature of optical illusions. For, there can be no complete picture of a civilization till it is extinct. And in the perspective of the far off future, the shape of things now so imposing will be widely different.

#### IMPORTANCE ADVENTITIOUS

In the not very distant past, when geography was in its infancy and races and countries knew only themselves and their immediate neighbours, imaginary and fantastic accounts made up for ignorance of the remote and undiscovered tracts. Beyond the circle of historical knowledge—the spotlighted area—must lie an enormous stretch of human experience, which, on a closer view or with fuller knowledge or by a shift of the perspective, would appear not so unimportant. These limitations and reservations being always borne in mind, the list set out above would be least misleading. It would give a fair idea of the main lines of human advance.

#### THE UNEQUAL MARCH

This advance may be likened to a Marathon race,—the competitors pressing on at unequal paces, some ahead, some fallen or falling behind, some already dropped off and sunk to the ground. But it is also like a relay-race or the journey of the fiery cross in which the unfinished task of an exhausted participant is handed on to a fresh entrant in the game. Thus the torch carried by a predecessor is borne along by a successor. And continuity is kept up in civilization:

Four phases or types are therefore clearly distinguishable: (1) The *hors de combat*; (2) The standstill; (3) The slow-paced and losing; (4) The go-aheads.



(1) *The Hors de Combat*RACES AND CIVILIZATIONS NOT  
WHOLLY EXTINCT

To describe the ancient races of the earth as necessarily extinct is hardly accurate. It is nearer the mark to speak of extinct civilizations. But even the latter concept is warranted within certain limits. Civilization comprises technique and aptitudes, ideas and institutions. No civilization can be called altogether extinct so long as these elements of its composition are not totally lost, erased from the memory of the race and untraceable in the practices and customs of any surviving society. The Hellenes and the Latins are dead, but the artistic and intellectual legacy of the former and the legal institutions and statecraft of the latter still enrich and colour the Western mind.

## SURVIVAL IN POSTERITY

But even where a civilization as a composite whole fades away, the race that reared it and thrived on it is not blotted out from its ancient seat. Mingled with the blood of immigrants and conquerors, that of the forefathers of the historic breed flows on in the veins of the present-day possessors of the land. Sometimes again dislodged from the ancestral seat by inclement Nature or more powerful nations, the descendants settled in alien lands still feel the glow and throb and tingle of the blood of the forefathers. No extensive portion of the earth's surface—once the seat of a civilization—is today unpeopled, everywhere the pressure of population is heavier than at any time in the past. And so, if absolutely pure races are no more than wishful fancies of racial egotism, every individual and every family alive on earth today can claim as long and as noble a pedigree as the proudest patrician or scion of an imperial dynasty. The lineage of each goes back to the First Man, nay, to the very beginnings.

## CASES OF MERGER AND EXTINCTION

Still the extinction of certain races has to be accepted as a fact. The case for extinction is confirmed by the dwindling and decadence

of races like the Polynesians and the Red Indians. In some cases the survivors of barbarian races are a remnant of those for the most part assimilated by neighbouring civilizations, e.g. the Scottish Highlanders, who, two centuries back, were a considerable number, but have now been absorbed in the British race. In the islands of the Indian archipelago dwell races that a few centuries back were Hindus or Buddhists in their religion and in social features, but today, while retaining much of the latter, have gone over to the Islamic faith. The relics of art and traces of social usage inspired by Hindu culture still mark their land and testify to their filiation to the Indic civilization in the past.

In the New World, the indigenous civilizations—Andean, Mayan, Yucatec, and Mexic,—the lineaments of which have now to be laboriously deciphered by archaeologists—had their death-blow in the ruthless onslaught of the Spanish conquistadores. In the onward march of humanity, these civilizations have fallen off and become extinct, not through the exhaustion of vitality or the overpowering inclemency of their physical environment. They were the victims of invasion by races of superior military power and organization. Uninterfered with by European adventurers, Mexic civilization might by now have covered North America.

(2) *The Standstill*

## ARRESTED GROWTH

In the second place there are the arrested civilizations. The Dark Races of Africa exhibit a static phase—a long pause on the primitive level through untold centuries—just like archaic forms of life which remain unchanged through whole geological periods. They illustrate how the ill-developed co-ordinative powers of the savage evade the strain of reflection. Nyasaland furnishes a typical picture of the primeval man—the child of Nature. He has the fewest wants and is apparently quite happy. He is a lesson in what 'a poor, bare, forked animal unaccommodated Man is'. He vegetates and is com-



fortable in his own way of life. A small part of the year he lives upon wild fruits and herbs. His staple food is the small, tasteless millet seed which grows in his garden. It is crushed in a mortar and with a little water made into a thick porridge. Twice a day he eats up a large pile of it. When rains moisten the hard soil, he delves it with his hoe, drops in a few handfuls of millet, and the year's work is done. His wife or wives are his millers and bakers. He eats apart from the other sex, for, to eat with a woman degrades him. One stick pointed makes him a spear, two sticks rubbed give him a fire, fifty sticks tied together make him a house. When he dies, a pipe, a mud bowl, and his bow and arrow are thrown into his grave,—all the wealth he had in life.

#### RELAPSE INTO PRIMITIVISM

Regressive reaction to life is also presented by the Easter Island, which was once the seat of Polynesian civilization, but has now relapsed into primitivism. It illustrates though negatively the need of interaction between races as an instrument of social advance. Western explorers discovered it as the seat of a dual population of flesh and stone. A high degree of skill in navigation alone could have enabled the bringers of the old civilization to cross the sea in their crude crafts and to reach it and to rear the works of art of which then they were masters. They carved stones into figures of remarkable size and beauty. The island has been won and occupied at the price of the longest sea passage. Such seafaring was at one time a common feat. Then the sea closed in round it; perhaps some of the near islands went under it. And the descendants thus isolated lost the skill to navigate which their forbears had. Plying frail open canoes across long distances, by degrees they went slack.

#### ARCTIC NORTHMEN

A similar fate overtook the Northmen, who, as daring fighters sweeping the seas all round, had left their home on the Continent and at last found themselves in Iceland—near *ultima*

Thule. Cut off from contact with the outside world, they turned their attention inward and became barbarians again. Hunting seals and whales, catching small fish, going up the heights in pursuit of reindeer or to extort tribute from the Lapps or clearing the forest and during winter dreaming, long heavy dreams, they descended to a mere animal plane of existence in which battle with the rigours of climate and the strenuous quest of food made up the whole routine and purpose of life.

#### ESQUIMAU LIFE—AN UNVARYING CYCLE

Similar engrossment in sheer biological activities in a severe climate and in a region of poor yield in life's barest needs similarly affected the life of the Esquimaux. The appliances devised by them for arctic life are perhaps the last word in the type of skill which the peculiar conditions called for. Life for the Esquimaux moves in a fixed annual cycle, with sharp transition from season to season. Whether in arctic or sub-arctic zone his winter home is on the coast-land and later on the sea-ice. In summer he moves inland and either hunts or catches fish and lives in tents. In the depth of winter snow-houses and in its beginning earth-houses shelter him. His stock of implements is small but most ingeniously suited to the vital operations and such as may be used by man or woman according to their power.

#### UNPROGRESSIVE APPARATUS

The dog-sledge, the Kayak, the *umiak* (or woman's boat) are the vehicles; the harpoon, the three-pronged salmon spear, the compound bow and arrow are his weapons for securing game. He moves in snow-shoes and skin garments. For larger catch, families are dispersed over as large an area as possible and society comes to be dissolved into its first element—the family. Lamps of blubber oil light his long nights. From year to year and age to age life moves in this uniform iron groove and despite the extraordinary skill shown in devising the crude apparatus, man is not the master but the slave of arctic Nature and all his energies and powers are taken up



with activities to keep life going. Movement and energy mark the routine, but there is no progress. The iron chain of constraint holds man down to a primitive round of duties.

#### THE NOMADIC ROUTINE OF MIGRATIONS AND ERUPTIONS

Yet another instance of this static manner of life is Nomadism, the theatre for which has by degrees been narrowed by more advanced modes of existence. It is life always moving on or off. Like the arctic fishing-fleet, cruising from bank to bank and revolving amidst the same round of haunts, the nomadic horde follows the same orbit of summer and winter pasture ranges. It is like the migrations of birds of passage from a colder to a warmer zone and back, from the South to the North in spring and in the reverse direction in autumn. Apart from this normal cyclic movement, confined within the limits of steppes or prairies in Central Asia or in South and North America, there have been recorded, since the second millennium B.C., occasional outbreaks as violent and sudden as volcanic eruptions. Nomadism being cattle-driving, the North-and-South range extended over hundreds or thousands of miles according to the ratio between heads of cattle and the pastoral resources of the range covered.

This normal movement was geographically limited and peaceful in character. But the violent eruptions were exceptional interludes although these have marked the deepest impress upon historical record. They were military operations rather than migrations of entire populations. These took place along certain breaks in the confines of the nomad's own domain, viz. the Eurasian steppe which extended from the Great Wall in China to Trans-Caspiana and to the Iron Gate, and the Afrasian steppe or desert oases, bordered on the east by the Euphrates and stretching irregularly to the Sudan, Somaliland, and Tropical Africa. Scythians, Mongols or Tartar-Avars, and Magyars spread terror in Asia and in the heart of Europe during sixth to thirteenth centuries of the Christian era, of

which a graphic and rather highly coloured picture is De Quincey's *The Revolt of the Tartars*.

#### UNRECORDED INVASIONS

In pre-Christian era the Hyksos eruption into Syria and Egypt, the Scythian incursion into Assyria, and that of Bantu-speaking negroids into Central and Southern Africa in the undated past are episodes which suggest that in the dusky unrecorded beginnings of civilization, invasions more frequently proceeded from nomadic tribes. For, in the dimness of archaic history, the cultural lineaments, nomadic or other, of aggressive races are hard to discern.

#### TILLAGE—THE DEATH-BLOW TO NOMADISM

But the details of the historical fortunes of the nomads apart, it is notable that in the Old World or the New, nomadism has for long been in its last gasp. In America, prairies were turned into cattle ranches and finally agriculture ruthlessly encroached upon the nomad's domains. Cribbed, cabined, and confined, nomadism has at last had to expire once again. And thus, on an extensive scale, 'Abel was slain by Cain'. The nomad's savage onslaught is nothing compared with the inexorable and relentless pressure on him of the cultivator, which slowly and inevitably narrowed the area and at last has extirpated this early phase of human economy. And today we have to be reminded that at one time it had been so wide-spread and so formidable a menace to its sedantary and less restive neighbours. Many factors joined in this consequence—turn of the climatic screw, shrinking of habitable area, desiccation, and thinning herds of animals. But the fatal finishing stroke has been the change-over to tillage.

#### (3) *The Slow-paced and Losing*

#### THE SLOW-GOING CIVILIZATIONS

In the third category of civilization—the slow-paced and losing concerns,—Western historians include Islamic, Indic, Sinic, and Far Eastern. Civilization spelt with a big 'C' is held to be another name for Westernization. The network of the Western economic and



political system now holds in its meshes nearly 60 and odd contemporary States, including the surviving States of non-Western origin.

#### THEIR SOUL NOT YET LOST

It is admitted, however, that while the frail primitive societies are being ground to powder by the ponderous Western steam-roller, and their faint outlines obliterated, the cultural map of the South and East of Asia remains substantially the same; the lineaments of the four living non-Western civilizations are still clear. The people living under them can still call their soul their own. And no Western man of science, poet, or saint can kindle in it the spiritual flame that is alight in his own. But the natives are still regarded as infra-human and are viewed without their cultural colour as part of the flora and fauna—as trees walking or wild animals infesting the lands they occupy in their teeming millions. The permanent epithet for the East is—'Unchanging'. In conceiving the unity of civilization, these four are denied recognition.

#### MARKS OF DECADENCE

The marks of decadence are pointed out in them as in the stationary primitive society. Social imitation in civilized society is directed forward towards the future and in the other kind backward to the older generation. The cake of custom cannot be broken and dynamic motion—resulting in change and growth—is stopped. And creative personalities are not born. Spiritual tension is low and there is an incapacity to break away from the stable order or social equilibrium of an older date which resulted from an adjustment of the human organization to the physical environment.

#### LACK OF HOMOGENEITY AND INTERCOURSE

The population under such civilizations is not of one, single, homogeneous type, but distributed among two or three markedly different categories. A number of separate castes stand out with different social functions. And the caste consciousness bars national solidarity. Society does not move forward as one united body, but is impeded by taboos

and inhibitions handed down from the past and still kept without a rationale in the context of modern life. These Oriental societies are like tideless lagoons beside the rolling sea of civilization. Creative contributions from more races than one make for civilization. It is the product of a push and pull upon mankind. A two-way traffic, exporting and importing men, goods, and ideas is the very essence of life. These civilizations are like still waters of a creek or lagoon, not stirred by the tides, gales, and currents which sweep over the main flood. They live segregated from the stirring intercourse of race and race and the exciting adventure of life with its dangers and disasters and exhilarations.

#### RIVETS OF THE PAST

The monuments of art which betoken their past greatness point to a phase in their lives after which they still yearn. Longingly they look back to the days of past glory of the race and find their deepest inspiration in them. The present phase of their life is no more than an epilogue to the main drama which was acted in the past. The Hindu outlook on life, in particular, is held to be pessimistic; it lacks a dynamic faith in progress and does not afford the incentive and stimulus, the drive, in a word, towards a fuller life and a better future—a golden age, which lies not in the past but is to be fashioned out of the multiplying resources and strenuous strivings of the present. The voice of one of our men declared the other day that the potentialities of the Brahminic religion was exhausted. It is a charge to which the three other surviving Oriental civilizations are open. A too long view of the fortunes of men and destinies of nations and the plenitude of their heritage with its other-worldly outlook oppress their mental horizon and slacken the sinews of active and inventive powers.

#### (4) *The Go-aheads*

##### THE UNCHECKED ADVANCE OF THE WEST

The very antithesis of these traits is claimed for Western civilization—in its two aspects: Western Christian and Orthodox



Christian in Russia. The latter, despite its marked divergence and its attitude of antagonism to the other, is regarded as its offshoot like the branch of a banyan tree which strikes roots of its own. Considering its world-wide sway and the dominance of its economic and political system, and its irresistible mechanical advance and industrial ascendancy,—which in all countries is overthrowing antecedents and competitors, it is said that the Western spirit is, as it were, a kind of psychic electricity—without a positive or negative charge—of which there can no longer be any exertion of the human psychic force.

#### MARXIST REACTION

The place of Orthodox Christianity in Russia is now under Marxism, held by a new atheistic Church militant. But from the vigour and energy with which not only industry and transportation but also agriculture is being mechanized and a nation of peasants is turning into a nation of mechanics, old Russia is fast becoming a new America. While denouncing Westernization, she is seeking its triumph almost with a zeal surpassing Peter the Great's attempt. By a like irony, in our country, Gandhism, though intended to be a protest against the ubiquitous Western culture, is being turned by many of its effective supporters into an instrument of its furtherance.

#### A SINGLE LINE OF ADVANCE

Western civilization further claims on its behalf that it is the culmination, and fruition of a single continuous culture beginning with the Minoan and Hellenic, the Syriac being a temporary excrescence on its body, which atrophied and dropped like the tail of a tadpole when it grows into a frog. Thus a single straight line of human advance is figured by telescoping three civilizations into one and world history is viewed as a continuity. This civilization is exclusively the achievement of White Men, as members not of the Indo-Aryan family, but of an exceptionally endowed race—the Teutonic, stand-

ing out and apart from all kinship in blood, the Nordic man.

#### POLITICO-ECONOMIC FEDERATION

The unique success of this civilization is seen in a political unification on the Western basis of the 60 odd contemporary States, including those of non-Western origin, the formation of a world-wide Comity of States,—the visible image and organ of its agency today being the UNO. The political unification has been followed by an economic unification, in its two distinctive features—mechanization and industrialization. The extent to which all instruments of living and killing are being mechanized throughout the world is patent. Over profit-sharing and the relation between employer and employee, between labour and capital, there might be cleavage of opinions and clash of ideologies; but in regard to the technique of productions and methods of organization and distribution, the octopus of the Western economic system spreads its tentacles all over the globe, and no fastness or primitive dwelling is beyond the reach of its penetration. Machinery is everywhere displacing tools and large-scale manufactures driving out handiworks. And the triumph has been completed by the strangling of the highly organized cottage industries of Japan, which were the last solitary hope of an earlier economy and the possible rival of the dominant system.

#### THE INCENTIVE OF TRUTH-SEEKING

The unique achievements of the West thrust themselves on acceptance by their intrinsic advantage as well as the power and vigour with which they are pushed, by the perfected arts of publicity and means of transit, by the methods and revelations of science which back them. Petty criticism alone ignores the abundant possession and the ceaseless pursuit of Truth which lay behind them and have made their ubiquity possible. Apart from the real world of matter, this irrepressible quest of Truth led and enabled the West to ransack world history and alien cultures and also to subject itself to searching



self-examination. The West has been its own diagnostician.

### WESTERN SELF-CRITICISM

And it is not easy for any outside critic to outdo the findings of the intimate self-criticism of Western thought. 'There is a potential tragedy in mechanical progress. Man is ethically unprepared for so great a bounty. The command of Nature has been put into his hands before he knows how to command himself'. 'The present mechanical civilization may be a talisman of victory without being a talisman of culture'. History records instances of the advance of technique without advance of civilization and cases in which geographical expansion was purchased at the price of social relapse. The cultural conflict between the European and Asiatic races seems to develop alongside of an internal crisis in the Western spirit.

### THE CHALLENGE OF BOLSHEVISM

The economic centre of gravity is shifting away from the British isles; there is, besides, the challenge of Bolshevism, directed against the entire Euro-American bloc and its outlook and social philosophy. Since 1917 Marxism has been turning into an emotional and intellectual substitute for Orthodox

Christianity. Its appeal to the proletariat gives it a sway over coloured races, as shown by recent Far Eastern events, against which democracy, with its program of world peace and economic co-operation makes an unequal stand. The best minds of Europe no doubt anxiously ask themselves aloud: Are we going to turn our new powerful 'drive' into a number of ancient anti-social institutions—war and tribalism, slavery and property? As against Western society, Russia's movement is at once centrifugal and centripetal. She resigns herself to incorporation into the great society and at the same time strives to keep aloof from its general life as a creative minority.

Amidst the tangle and turmoil of these contrary forces, the realization of the ideal of Sarvodaya or co-prosperity, peace, and happiness for all seems to be a far cry—a cry of the heart. The only hope of emergence from the plight seems to lie in the cultivation of a superconsciousness—a common self-consciousness—which sees in the round, in the largest perspective, the ailings of each and the interests of all, the elements which disunite and the purposes and the processes which unite, the individuality of the races and the solidarity of mankind.

*(To be continued)*

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## DHANYASHTAKA

### OF SHANKARACHARYA

BY K. R. PISHAROTI

Man has always been in search of happiness. It is this search that has brought into existence the varied kinds of arts and crafts, that has made possible the many scientific inventions, and that has expanded the realm of human knowledge, both material and spiritual; in short, it is this quest of happiness that has

rendered possible the manifold human achievements, all intended presumably to advance knowledge, happiness, and life, and of which man is legitimately proud. At the same time, it is this very quest that has brought untold miseries and manifold sorrows that man has had to suffer from through the centuries.



Despite his sufferings and achievements, however, he has not succeeded in maximizing human happiness, speaking from a collective point of view; indeed, instead of raising it, he has only lowered it. Speaking individually, the happiness he has been after has always eluded him, and he has failed in his quest—failed because he does not know the true nature of what he has been searching for, failed because he has been searching for it where it was not. He has all along been after a mirage, after an 'imaginary black cat in a dark room'. What is happiness, where is it to be found, and how is it to be secured are, therefore, questions of paramount importance, of perennial interest, to everybody, for, all of us are alike interested in this one thing. This is the theme of the *Dhanyāṣṭaka Stotra*.

Happiness is an attitude of mind, of the knowing, feeling, and willing *citta*, and the measure of success or rather its realization, depends entirely on the extent of achievement of the ideals for which we dedicate our lives. Ideals, no doubt, differ from place to place, people to people, and time to time. Nevertheless, the fundamentals, embodied in the ideals presented in this hymn, against the background of Hindu culture, are true at all times and for all human beings who strive for something more than mere materialistic achievements.

From the point of view elaborated here, man in search of happiness cannot find it anywhere outside himself. It is within himself. Hence, if he must find it, he must find it in himself and this is possible only when he can sift the real from the unreal, the essential from the non-essential, the significant from the insignificant. And the process involves, in the first place, the cultivation of a right attitude towards life and all that has life and a correct evaluation of man and things; and, in the second place, a reorientation of life in terms thereof. In other words, he must spiritualize his whole life if he would become a Dhanya—one who is truly blessed.

The Dhanya passes through two stages. As a householder, he is engaged in the search

of the ultimate Truth, the Truth that is established in the Upanishads. He conquers the senses and the passions—such as greed and hatred, love and jealousy,—cultivates non-attachment, and makes himself fit enough for further advance in the path of progress towards spiritualization. He then devotes himself to concentration and contemplation for the realization of the knowledge of the Self (*ātma-jñāna*). In due course, he ascends to a higher plane, rises above the distinctions of 'I', 'you', and 'he' and treats alike pain and pleasure, honour and dishonour. Everything external and internal is alike to him and he renders as service unto the Lord every one of his actions. Finally he renounces home and all that had appeared to be his till then in order to become a Sannyāsin, living on whatever means available, ultimately migrating to the forest to keep company with those noble souls who have realized the Supreme Godhead—there to devote himself entirely to the attainment of the bliss that is ever present and effulgent within him.

This path is not easy, particularly for those who are entangled in the toils and travails of everyday life. But it is worth while to remember that the high road to bliss is not the monopoly of any particular individual; it is open to all alike, irrespective of caste and creed, race and religion, and sex and colour. This apart, the very knowledge of the true nature of happiness is something valuable, for, it may at least prevent us from running away with false notions of it and wreck our lives in fruitless search after it. Again, it may serve as a valuable ideal, the adoption of which would certainly prevent us from degrading ourselves. Indeed, the knowledge of the inner treasure we have, of what we really are in essence, and of what we may realize after striving, gives us strength to bear up against all odds that face us in life.

'Know thyself' is an oft-quoted expression. Let us understand ourselves aright. Knowing oneself, that is,—one's Self, is knowing the Godhead. This should be life's endeavour, for, this is itself the highest know-



ledge, the highest bliss, that man can attain. Acquiring disintegrated items of knowledge pertaining to various phenomena—material and physical, acquiring control over man and his environment without at the same time knowing the great purpose behind the universe, and perfecting scientific and technological achievements with a view to minimizing man's toils and tears, however laudable these may in themselves be, do not constitute the end and aim of life and do not and cannot lead to lasting happiness. But, generally speaking, they result only in disappointment and frustration. If we wish to enjoy real happiness, we must devote our life fully to one object, viz. the realization of the ultimate Truth, the Truth embodied in that wonderful Shruti text of three words—*tat-tvam-asi*. Self-knowledge is sovereign bliss and the way to it lies in consciously cultivating the spiritual attitude in every phase of life.

### DHANYĀSHTAKA

*Tajjñānam praśamakaram yadindriyāṇām,  
Tajjñeyam yadupaniṣatsu niścītārtham.  
Te dhanyā bhuvi paramārtha-niścitechāh.  
Śeṣastu bhrama-nilaye paribhramanti. (1)*

1. That is knowledge which leads to the control of the senses;<sup>1</sup> that is to be studied which is definitely established in the Upanishads.<sup>2</sup> They are the Blessed on earth whose desires are fixed upon the ultimate Truth; others, however, wander about in the realm of confusion.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> True knowledge is that which helps man to rise up to his full stature and this is possible only if it helps him to control his senses.

<sup>2</sup> Note the term *niścītārtham*: it emphasizes the importance of learning the *idea* and not merely the word. As matters are today, our learning consists more of words than of ideas. We talk of gods, of spirits, of religion, of morality, of beauty, etc.; but a little reflection shows that in these as in other things we learn only words and not ideas. Verbalization is the main part of our study and research. This is an important truth never to be forgotten.

<sup>3</sup> In other words, continuing to live in the realm of misapprehension and ignorance.]

*Ādau vijitya viṣayān-mada-moha-rāga-  
Dveṣādi-śatrugaṇamāhṛta-yogarājyāh,  
Jñātvā'mṛtam samanubhūya parātma-vidyā-  
Kāntāsukham vana-grhe vicaranti dhanyāh. (2)*

2. Having first conquered the objects of the senses,<sup>4</sup> and the host of enemies such as pride, ignorance, attachment, hatred, etc., having wrested the kingdom of Yoga, having tasted the nectar, and having enjoyed the bliss of the 'beloved' of Self-knowledge, they live Blessed in their forest-homes.

[<sup>4</sup> When the senses are controlled, the conquest of *rāga* and *dveṣa* naturally follows. Once this is achieved, the Yogi's entering into the kingdom of eternal contemplation is like the entry of a victorious warrior into the kingdom of his vanquished enemy.]

*Tyaktvā grhe ratimato gatihetu-bhūtām-  
Atmecchayopaniṣadārtha-rasam pibantah,  
Vita-sprhā viṣayabhogapade viraktā,  
Dhanyāscaranti vijaneṣu vimukta-saṅgāh. (3)*

3. Giving up the pleasures of home which lead the mind astray, freely drinking the nectar of the knowledge of the Upanishads, and free of all desires, shunning sense-enjoyments,<sup>5</sup> the Blessed wander unattached in lonely places.

[<sup>5</sup> When they have understood and realized this *artha*, they become free of *sprhā* (desires), and have, therefore, a disgust for objects of sense-enjoyment.]

*Tyaktvā mamāhamiti bandhakare pade dve,  
Mānāvamāna-saḍṛśāh samadarśinaśca,  
Kartāram-anyam-avagamya tadarpitāni,  
Kurvaṇti karma-paripāka-phalāni dhanyāh. (4)*

4. Discarding the two terms 'I' and 'mine' which involve bondage, (treating) honour and dishonour alike, viewing all things with an equal eye,<sup>6</sup> realizing that the doer is another, the Blessed render as service<sup>7</sup> unto Him all that they do by virtue of Karma.

[<sup>6</sup> It means not differentiating things where no differentiation exists.

<sup>7</sup> This is an important aspect. All actions man is called upon to perform are to be made



an offering to God. Man is after all an instrument in the hands of God. Acting in consonance with this idea goes a long way to make man more human and the world we live in more habitable.]

*Tyaktveṣaṇātrayam-avekṣita-mokṣa-mārgā,  
Bhaikṣyāmṛtena parikalpita-dehayātrāh,  
Jyotih parātparataram paramātma-saṁjñam,  
Dhanyā dviajā rahasi hṛdyavalokayanti. (5)*

5. Giving up the triad of Eshanās,<sup>8</sup> following the path of liberation, living upon what is obtained by begging,<sup>9</sup> the Blessed Dviyas<sup>10</sup> visualize in their minds, in secret, that supreme effulgence called Paramātmā.

[<sup>8</sup> The three dominant urges, viz. those for obtaining children (*putra*), wealth (*vitta*), and heaven (*loka*).

<sup>9</sup> The term *dehayātrā* signifies keeping body and soul together. When man is not worried about the means of livelihood, he can harness all his energies for the greater purpose in life, viz. the realization of *ātma-jñāna*. He takes to the beggar's bowl not as a profession but as a means of releasing his energies for a higher purpose, for spiritual attainment.

<sup>10</sup> Literally, 'the twice-born', i.e. one who is really 're-born', spiritually re-awakened.]

*Nāsanna sanna sadasanna mahanna cānu,  
Na strī pumāna ca napumsakam-ekabījam,  
Yaiḥ Brahma tat-samanuṣṭitam-ekacittā,  
Dhanyā virejur-itare bhavapāśa-baddhāh. (6)*

6. It (Brahman) is not Sat (existence), is not Asat (non-existence), is not Sat-Asat; nor

is it great, nor small; it is not feminine, or masculine, or neuter. They shine, the Blessed, by whom that Brahman is contemplated; others are tied down by the coil of existence.

*Ajñāna-ṣaṅka-parimagnam-apeta-sāram,  
Duhkhālayam maraṇa-janma-jarāvasaktam,  
Samsāra-bandhanam-anityam-avekṣya dhanyā,  
Jñānāsinā tad-avaśīrya viniścayanti. (7)*

7. Realizing that existence is ephemeral, that it is like immersion in the mire of ignorance, that it is void of reality, that it is the abode of sorrow, and that it is contaminated by the touch of birth, old age, and death,—the Blessed satisfy themselves by rending it asunder with the sword of knowledge.

*Sāntair-ananya-matibhir-madhura-svabhāvaiḥ,  
Ekatva-niścita-manobhir-apeta-mohaiḥ,  
Sākam vaneṣu viditātma-para-svarūpam,  
Śāstreṣu samyaganiṣam vimṛśanti dhanyāh. (8)*

8. In the forests, in the company of Shāntas (those full of calm and equanimity), whose minds are devoted to nothing else, who are sweet-tempered, who have realized their oneness with the Paramatma, and who are free from ignorance,—the Blessed ever meditate intensely on the transcendent nature of the Self known through the Shastras.

Thus end the eight verses of the Ashtaka by Shankaracharya, setting forth the qualifications of a Dhanya and also the means to the attainment of that blessed state. One who can translate this into action in his everyday life, in relation to men and things, is the ideal man. Such a one alone enjoys real happiness.

'Sever thy craving for the sense-objects, which are like poison, for it is the very image of death, and giving up thy pride of caste, family, and order of life, fling actions to a distance. Give up thy identification with such unreal things as the body, and fix thy mind on the Atman. For thou art really the Witness, Brahman, unshackled by the mind, the One without a second, and Supreme. . . .

'The universe is an unbroken series of perceptions of Brahman, hence it is in all respects nothing but Brahman. See this with the eye of illumination and a serene mind, under all circumstances. Is one who has eyes ever found to see all around anything else but forms? Similarly, what is there except Brahman to engage the intellect of a man of realization?'

—Vivekacūḍāmaṇi



# THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE MIND

BY SANAT KUMAR RAY CHAUDHURY

Philosophers and scientists seem to disagree in their views on the real nature and constitution of the mind.

Materialists, who do not admit the existence of a Creator, say that mind is a function of the body, resulting from the combination of certain organic materials, similar to a chemical reaction. They often argue that life itself has evolved on this planet owing to some such chance reaction.

Those, however, who hold that life is a divine manifestation, express the opinion that mind is one of the internal organs (*antahkarana*). It is something more subtle than matter and survives physical death of the body. They say that it is one of the most potent forces in man's life and is the cause of his happiness or sorrow. If mastered and properly trained by man, mind leads him to liberation. If allowed to master man, it brings him bondage and misery.

Whatever may be the origin of the mind, we have to accept the fact that it exists. We have also to acknowledge the power of the mind as a creative force in man's life. If so, then, it may legitimately be asked: What is the constitution and what are the potentialities of the mind?

One of the mind's functions is to 'remember' and to direct our sense-organs accordingly. To cite the classical example: If a man remains without food, say, for a fortnight, he can scarcely 'remember' things which were vivid in his memory when his fast commenced, nor can he direct his sense-organs or receive impressions from outside properly. If he takes food, his mental powers are restored. This brings out the real constitution of the mind. It is something whose power ordinarily depends upon the absorption

of material nourishment by the body for its functioning.

Now, if this be granted, we have to see next whether the mind is something which is like other kinds of matter and can be perceived by the senses. A little investigation will show that the mind can never be made the 'object' of any of our sense-organs, though we can know its existence from its functionings.

Some philosophers say that the visible world has no existence except in our minds. It is no doubt hard to realize the truth of this statement. We constantly receive knocks from obstructions on our path, which forcibly remind us of the existence of an external physical world. Nevertheless it is the mind which feels and registers the knocks, and inasmuch as the outside world is to the individual a sum total of impressions it may be said that apart from one's mind there is no separate existence of the world to the percipient. The point is established by another classical example. If a marriage procession, with music, passes in front of a person who is deeply meditating on something else, that person will not have 'heard' or 'seen' the procession and so far as he is concerned there has been no procession.

Another way of looking at the problem is to consider the entire creation as a 'seeing' (*ikṣāṇam*) of the Divine Mind. If It ceases to see the creation, there will be dissolution (*laya*) and the universe will disappear. This is true only of the Divine Mind. According to this theory, individual consciousness (*jīva caitanya*) is but a reflection of the Divine Consciousness (*cit*). Hence the human mind must have some faint reflection of the power of the Divine.

However, everyone is more or less aware



of the creative power of the mind, though different in different individuals. Some can read the thoughts of others, some can influence the actions of others, some can even overcome the barriers of space and time, and appear before and talk to persons who are far away from the place where the former are physically present. As has been said by a great seer of our times, there are instances where the functions and experiences of a higher plane, viz. the supra-mental, obtrude into that of our mental plane.

Such miraculous powers (*vibhūti*) result usually from the practice of Yoga. In rare cases these powers come to a person naturally, without any training immediately preceding them. The primary requisite (in Yoga) is concentration of the mind and its purification.

Even agreeing with the materialists that mind in its essence is 'material', there is no inherent impossibility in its developing strange powers. If mind be material, it is akin to the sun's rays partaking of the qualities of energy and of attenuated or sublimated matter. If the energy pent up in one atom of gross matter be practically limitless,—as has been demonstrated by scientists,—there is no bar to the hypothesis that the energy or force lying hidden and unutilized in the human mind is also limitless, waiting for the 'magic wand' of Yoga or concentration and purification, to manifest its hidden powers.

If mind is energy, it must possess the power of destruction as well as of creation like other forms of energy. The destructive aspect of energy is well known to science and scientists; the creative aspect is not so well known and we are only beginning to have a glimmering of it.

With the progress of science, the advent of the atom bomb, and the latest theories of relativity, our ideas of energy and matter have undergone a revolution. Energy can now be considered as an aspect and condition

of matter. If this is granted, then there is no inherent impossibility in energy assuming the form of matter, though we may not always know the technique of the conversion of the one into the other. Thus there is no inconsistency in mind creating matter or material things.

The evidence in support of such powers of the mind is not readily accepted and is pooh-poohed by the so-called realists. In our country, Tantrics have been known to create powerful and subtle forces which are called by them as *Kriyas*. In the lives of our saints we find instances when food and help came to them unasked, in unlikely places, whenever a necessity for the same was felt.

The function of the mind is mainly twofold—resolution (*saṅkalpa*) and doubt (*vikalpa*). There is a stage in man's evolution (to a higher sphere) when he becomes *Satya-saṅkalpa*, i.e. whatever he wishes comes true. At that stage the mind becomes fully creative, and man acquires a truly godly attribute.

Looking at the question from another angle, we find the human mind creative (though not of gross physical matter) even in cases where it has not undergone any special training. A child fed on ghost-stories will create for itself imaginary ghosts, for fear of which it will not venture into the dark. A person with an obsession sees the dreaded object in the most unlikely places. A great painter has a vision of his future masterpiece, a great musician of his future symphony. In all these cases the mind has been made one-pointed (*ekāgra*) and it acquires creative force.

But the mind's power of 'physical' creation cannot and should not be ruled out. If we follow the path prescribed by our great teachers and seers, we can certainly attain a stage wherein our minds will be freed from their physical limitations and become really creative.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Much vagueness of thought still centres round the correct Indian concept of Faith as a requisite Sādhana for attaining the Highest Knowledge, especially amongst Western scholars. Taking Bradley's well-known views as a 'test case' and refuting, at the same time, the suggestion that faith is 'unverified belief' or 'non-rational suppression of doubt' or 'blind assent to authority', Prof. Makhanlal Mukherji, M.A., P.R.S., investigates the relation between and the scope and meaning of *Faith and Knowledge*. . . .

It is for philosophers and mystics to say what the great English poet and dramatist could exactly have meant when he referred to the ephemeral life of man as *Such Stuff as Dreams are made on*. In his learned article, bearing this significant title, Prof. Kshitish Chandra Chakravarti, M.A., B.L., discusses, mainly from an Advaitin's standpoint, the hotly contested and widely differing implications of the ultimate One and the apparent Many, citing relevant authorities in support. . . .

Physically as well as metaphysically the world is one. Men and their civilizations vary. But at no time in the history of man has the demand for uniting the whole world under one world government and through one world organization been so insistent as today. The receding hopes of a world understanding in the deliberations of the councils of nations is a sombre prospect. In a masterly analysis of the origin and destiny of man and the rise and fall of races and civilizations, Sri Batuknath Bhattarcharya makes an objectively critical study of world conditions—past and present, setting forth the great factors of culture and civilization that alone can lead mankind *Towards One World*.

### DUKE ARMAND OF RICHELIEU

Armand de Chapelle de Jumilhac, the Duke of Richelieu, a Marshall of France and

scion of the French nobility, who was a great lover of India and had known Swami Vivekananda intimately, passed away at New York on 30th May 1952, at the age of seventy-six. As a young man, the Duke, who was the last to bear his illustrious title, had been a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda, whom he had met in Paris in 1900. He cherished his admiration for the Swami till the end of his life and was always full of love and respect for him.

Giving his reminiscences of the Duke of Richelieu, whom he had known rather closely, Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, writes in the *Modern Review* (for August 1952):

'I first met the Duke in 1934 when I was crossing over to France. Immediately after the ship had left the pier in New York. I was told by Princess Matchabelli that the Duke of Richelieu earnestly wanted to speak to me. We met after dinner on the deck of the tourist class, by which I was travelling. He said to me that he had known Swami Vivekananda. They had met in Paris in 1900, at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Francis H. Leggett, devoted disciples of the Swamiji. It was the time of the Paris Exposition, in connection with which the late Sir J. C. Bose was the Indian representative at the Congress of Scientists. The Leggetts used to invite notables to their house and entertained them lavishly.

'About Swami Vivekananda the Duke said that he was a singularly handsome man. At first he had taken the Swamiji for one of the Indian Yogis known in Europe as performers of tricks. But soon he came under the spell of the Swamiji's personality and visited him regularly for several weeks. One day Swami Vivekananda said to the Duke that he was leaving for India the next day and wanted to know if the Duke would give up the world and become his disciple. The Duke asked what he would receive in return. "I shall give you the desire for death", the Swamiji replied.



The Duke laughed thinking that the Swamiji was being silly. He had just graduated from the university and was about to enter upon a career—what would he do with death? He asked the Swamiji to offer something more tempting. The Swamiji said, gravely, "If you become my disciple, I shall give you a state of mind such that when death comes you will laugh at it". The Duke thought that the Swamiji was teasing. The next day Swami Vivekananda left and they never met again.

'The Duke of Richelieu told me that for thirty years he had completely forgotten Swami Vivekananda. Two years prior to our meeting, however, he had passed through a certain crisis and a great change had come over his life. Suddenly one day every word Swami Vivekananda had said to him came back to his mind, and he became very eager to know where the Swamiji was or what had become of him. He inquired about the Swamiji in Paris, New York, and London, but could obtain no information about him. When he saw my name on the passengers' list on board the ship, he thought I might be able to tell him about Swami Vivekananda. We had ten delightful days together on the ship, holding stimulating conversations in the evening after dinner. The Duke gave me a letter of introduction to the President of the Sorbonne and said that we must meet again in New York. He told me that he had a house in New York City not very far from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre.

'We saw each other many times in New York. Both the Duke and the Duchess became fond of me and often invited me to their house for dinner or luncheon, where I met noted men in politics and public life. On several occasions, the Duke and Duchess came to the Centre for dinner. The last time I saw the Duke was in Miami, Florida, in April 1952. We had lunch together and he discussed the present world tension, from a philosophical standpoint. He looked very fragile. But as usual he was very animated and excited in conversation'. . . .

'The Duke was full of respect for Swami Vivekananda and bore towards him sincere affection. In the Duke's opinion the Swamiji stressed the value of the individual as against the group. The individual can effectively influence the group by remaining distinct from it, and not, like a labour leader, by identifying himself with it. Further, the individual need not cut himself away from the group for his own benefit, as asserted by medieval Christianity. According to Swami Vivekananda, the Duke thought, the true worth of the individual lay in his being universal, and that of the universal in its being individual. He further said that in Vivekananda, the confusion of life was resolved into distinctness of consciousness, as in art the obscurity of sentiment and feeling is transformed into the lucidity of representation, because it itself creates the image—the unity of the image. The Duke learned from the Swamiji that God is near Truth but is not Truth:

"After learning not to be disturbed by evil, we must learn not to be made happy by good. We must go beyond evil and good and see that both are necessary".

'Swami Vivekananda said to the Duke that love is higher than work, Yoga, and knowledge. In the Duke's opinion, man is not passive, but is an active agent; and history seemed to him to be the story not of man's evolution, but of his creation, of his conscious effort to bring about change both in himself and in his surroundings'.

On 10th January 1952, the Duke was present and spoke a few words on the occasion of the unveiling of the bust of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York. Among other things, he observed that whereas America had stood for the physical independence of man, India had stood for his spiritual independence. And he added that while man's physical independence had led, ironically enough, to wars and exploitation, his spiritual independence had bred, in recent times, the greatest transformation of man in the last three centuries.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHIES. BY WILLIAM D. GOULD, GEORGE B. ARBAUGH, and R. F. MOORE. Published by Russell F. Moore Company, 475 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 233. Price \$4.50.

*Ex oriente lux*—Light cometh from the East. The need for some comprehensive interpretation of the formula is suggested by the issue of a third and revised edition of a book on Oriental philosophy which conducts the reader to the treasures buried in the sacred literature of the East. Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz in his Introduction to the book draws our attention to the fact that, during the last century, Western scholars, by imperceptible stages, have come to recognize the importance of Eastern thought. Sanskrit words have found their way into the Oxford *New English Dictionary*. We are today bathed in the cultural influences of a Renaissance far mightier than that which transformed fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe.

The excerpts from Eastern literature given in this book owe much to translations of acknowledged merit. The reader can glimpse here something of the dignified ease of the rendering of the Upanishads by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester; of the *Gita* by Swami Paramananda; of the Chinese classics by James Legge; of the 'Way and Its Power' by Arthur Waley; of Giles's *Chuang Tzu*. The origin, growth, and principal features of the various Eastern philosophies are sketched in appropriate sections. There is a short chapter devoted to 'Contemporary Indian Philosophy' which glances at Gandhi, Tagore, Radhakrishnan, and Dasgupta. Samples of Dr. Radhakrishnan's thinking in his *Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* and in his *An Idealist View of Life* are provided.

While there is much to admire in a venture like this, some admonitions may not be out of place. Miguel de Unamuno, speaking for his nation, said that 'If we have any Spanish metaphysics, it is mysticism' and Julian Marias has pronounced that 'Existentialism need not be introduced into Spain, because it is already there'. Whether or not we accept these estimates of Spanish philosophy, there can be no question that Indian philosophy is steeped in a richly significant religious mysticism; it is 'Existentialism' in the highest sense of the term. It is embarking on the quest for Reality and not merely a doctoral dissertation on 'How to embark on the quest'. The story of Nachiketas in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* illustrates this highly dialectical approach to philosophy. It is doubtful whether

any summary of Indian philosophy can adequately convey this note of urgency. Eastern mysticism is not a recondite 'flight to the Alone' but a call to humility and self-questioning. Wu Shih-Chang, writing in the *Aryan Path* for November 1951, has illustrated the striking affinities in this respect between Gandhi and Lao-Tsze. For Eastern thought, Reality is not only an 'Ultimate' as Gould, Arbaugh, and Moore declare, but also an 'Intimate'. The statement that 'epistemologically, *true* and *false*, as applied to knowledge, are words made for and used by reason' and that 'since the ultimate realization of truth transcends reason . . . these terms become meaningless and therefore inapplicable' (p. 14) must be understood in this context. It is the very nature of philosophy that constitutes a problem and a challenge in the Eastern climate. And it is surely not without significance that for modern man too it is tending to become a problem and a challenge. How otherwise can we understand the rise of Logical Positivism, on the one hand, and Existentialism, on the other, in the West?

It may be doubted again whether a purely historical and textual method of exposition can ever do justice to the universalism of Eastern thought. In outsiders at least, the method leaves the impression of exquisitely carved antique pieces which can be admired indeed for their exquisiteness, but have no relevance for a too bustling scientific age. It is not because Eastern thought is 'deficient in its ability to analyse' (p. 204) that it concerns itself with 'synthesis', but because it realizes only too well that the 'analytical method' is exposed to certain peculiar disabling limitations in the higher reaches of experience. The universalism of Eastern thinkers is sometimes dismissed unkindly as 'syncretism' and 'Theosophy' or more politely as 'a tendency toward discovering similarities rather than differences'. Few stop to notice that this universalism is far more than the consolation that whatever philosophy a man holds to, he must admit all the others as 'valid moods'. The impressive fact that mystics speaking all tongues and expounding all doctrines shared their deepest insights and refused to be tied to 'schools', which is slowly dawning on modern scholars, raises questions about the parochialism of 'East' and 'West' which colours popular expositions. Eastern philosophy is ever conscious of the amplitude of the spaces in which it dwells and so insists that the temple of the true believer must not degenerate into the chapel of a sect. Without this 'Eastern Candle of Vision' (as A. E. called it), a movement like Ramakrishnaism cannot be understood. Neither



Sri Ramakrishna nor Swami Vivekananda was a professional philosopher; yet both were vehicles of Eastern religious thought in a sense in which professional philosophers can never be.

The compromise suggested by Gould, Arbaugh, and Moore that 'we should take that in Oriental philosophy which fulfils the deficiencies of our own systems' is valid up to a point. Nevertheless to those questing for deeper truths, it cannot have a lasting value. Certainly it will never do to say that the West has provided us with a 'scientific philosophy' and 'logic' and the East with a 'religious philosophy' and 'intuition'. Have the boundaries of science been mapped out with finality? Has the West honestly and competently assessed the truth about Raja Yoga? Not mere 'synthesis' but a comprehensive reformulation of the bases of Western and Eastern thought is the desideratum. Such a reformulation will convince us that civilization is neither Western nor Eastern but is one universal culture which is ever widening its base by increasing the number of its culture-traits. Eckhart, St. Francis of Assisi, and Soloviev are no more the monopoly of the West than Shankara, Lao-Tsze and Buddha are the monopoly of the East.

C. T. K. CHARI

SELECTED LETTERS (FIRST SERIES). BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-9. Pages 64. Price 7 As.*

It is a fine collection of some of Gandhiji's letters, mostly translated from the original Gujarati, written to Ashrama Sisters and children, to workers, and to others, including one to H. Kallenbach. Gandhiji's writings are always meaningful and inspiring, and more so are these letters which are written in an informal way and in simple language. Gandhiji has, of course, briefly, touched upon many things, such as punctuality, watching one's friends, conquest of the fear of death, celebration of auspicious occasions and events. As one covers these letters one seems to cover entire life.

B. S. MATHUR.

GLEANINGS, GATHERED AT BAPU'S FEET. BY MIRA. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 9.*

This brochure contains some letters by Mahatma Gandhi and a few notes from his conversations taken down by Mira Behn. Those who are closely acquainted with the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi will not find in it many new thoughts. But any word from the pen or lips of the Mahatma has got historical value. As such these gleanings deserve publication.

S.P.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA. BY G. RAMAKANTACHARYA. *To be had of Rasatarangini Press, Vijayawada. Pages 36. Price Re. 1.*

The book analyses the doctrine of the *Gita* from the Vishishtādvaitic standpoint. Readers are generally acquainted with the Advaitic standpoint, popularized by leading thinkers and scholars. The author has convincingly set forth some points which support his contention that the main teaching of the *Gita* is the supremacy of Bhakti or devotion to a Personal God.

CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH. BY G. S. BHARTIYA. *Published by the Navaprabhat Prakashan Mandir, Kymore, Madhya Pradesh. Pages 43. Price Re. 1.*

The author deals with the various problems connected with the co-operative movement and suggests original and helpful methods for developing the consumers' co-operative commonwealth.

BENGALI

TANTRER ALO. BY MAHENDRA NATH SARCAR. *Published by Prabartak Publishers, 61, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta 12. Pages 199. Price Rs. 4.*

This is an introduction to Tantra philosophy, written in an elevated and imaginative manner. While the book will be very illuminating to those who have some previous acquaintance with the subject and philosophy in general, it may appear tough and too technical for the layman in understanding the elements of Tantra. The technical terms used freely in the book could better have been clearly explained either in the body or in an appendix.

The author has ably compared Tantra with related systems of philosophy, e.g. Vedanta and Sankhya, in an attempt to estimate the relative values of these alternative lines of thought. The author has, without showing any bias, kept throughout an admirably philosophical temper. This learned treatise from the pen of a renowned philosopher makes it possible to understand that Tantra can exert a healthy influence on our individual and social life.

P. J. CHAUDHURY.

BODHAN. BY SATYAKINKAR MUKHOPADHYAYA. *Published by Narendranath Chattopadhyaya, 8C, Ramanath Mazumdar Street, Calcutta. Pages 80. Price Rs. 1-8.*

This is a book of poems, in simple Bengali, dealing mainly with the life of Sri Krishna and his divine disport with the Gopis of Vrindaban.

INDIAN VA HINDU? BY DR. SANTOSH KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAYA. *Published by Hindustan Sahitya Sangha, 4, Subal Chandra Lane, Calcutta. Pages 32. Price As. 6.*

It is a study, in brief, of such topics as the origin of the name 'Hindu', whether the Hindus are a nation, and the important cultural and other forces that bind the Hindus together.



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL AND SARADA MANDIR, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR 1947-1950

The School, founded in 1898 by Sister Nivedita—one of the foremost of Swami Vivekananda's Western disciples,—to educate the women of our country according to traditional Indian ideals, was started as a kindergarten for girls. It gradually expanded and developed into a real nation-building institution, reaching the very heart of the nation through its educated women.

*Curriculum:* During the period under review there were altogether eighteen classes, including sections of different classes, beginning from the Infant to the Matriculation class. Classes from V to X were affiliated to the Calcutta University in 1949, and the school followed the syllabus prescribed by the University. Kindergarten methods were followed in the Infant and Primary sections. Oral training formed an important part of the method of teaching. Some lessons in sewing and embroidery were compulsory from the Infant class to Class VIII. In the selection of text-books the management laid stress on books that inspire the students with the lofty ideals of their religion and culture. The number of students on the rolls each year during the period was as follows: 622 in 1947, 588 in 1948, 751 in 1949, and 651 in 1950.

*Industrial Section:* The School also conducted special courses in tailoring, sewing, embroidery, and knitting classes, free of any tuition fees, especially for poor women, with the idea of making them self-supporting. There were 56 students on the rolls in this section in the year 1949.

*Library:* At the end of the year 1950 the School library had 3,200 volumes, in addition to receiving newspapers and magazines in English and Bengali.

*Chhātri Sangha:* From 1941 an association named *Chhātri Sangha* was formed which held its weekly sittings, open to students from Classes V to X. Discourses on religion, biography, history, literature, etc., as also debates on current topics, were held. The students, with the help of the teachers, issued a manuscript magazine.

*Sārādā Mandir:* This unique institution serves as an ideal Home and a training centre for dedicated women (Brahmachārinis) who are desirous of devoting themselves entirely to a life of renunciation and service in the cause of women's welfare.

The Sarada Mandir also serves as a residential boarding-house for students of the School who have had to live away from their parents during their years of study.

The following statement shows the number of inmates during the period under report:

Year	Total	Free & Part-free Boarders	Honorary Workers
1947	44	15	6
1948	48	16	3
1949	45	15	6
1950	45	12	7

*Religious Education:* In order to give effect to the lofty educational ideals of Swami Vivekananda, the School lays stress on the training of character as the true basis of education. A spiritual atmosphere is maintained throughout by holding prayers before the commencement of school work, and by conducting daily Puja, scriptural classes, and pilgrimages to holy places.

*Needs:* The Institution needs funds for the purchase of a suitable plot of land to serve as a playground for the students. The need of a training centre for the dedicated women (Brahmachārinis), preferably a secluded place (with an extensive plot of land) in the suburbs of Calcutta, where the inmates of the Sarada Mandir can lead a life of spiritual contemplation, and where other women—young and old—may live from time to time and profit by the holy atmosphere, is keenly felt. Funds for this purpose and for the maintenance of the inmates of the Sarada Mandir are urgently needed. For the conveyance of pupils and teachers from and to distant quarters of the city the School requires a motor-bus.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION LIBRARY, PURI

REPORT FOR 1949-51

The Ramakrishna Mission Library, Puri, one of the best of its kind in Orissa, was started in 1925 and has been rendering very useful service to the public. It is a combined lending library and free reading-room. The total number of books at the end of the year 1951 was 12,456 and 6,778 books were added during the three years under report. The total numbers of books issued to the public were 16,573 in 1949, 22,790 in 1950, and 18,894 in 1951. The Reading-room is furnished with as many as 82 papers and periodicals and the average daily attendance during the three consecutive years under report was 136, 170.5, and 171 respectively. The total number of subscribers to the Library rose



from 194 at the beginning of 1949 to 210 at the end of 1951.

The institution undertook also the following activities:

**Cultural Work:** Regular classes on the *Gita*, the Upanishads, and the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were conducted for the public. Religious, philosophical, and literary discourses, 42 in all during the period under review, by scholars and visiting savants were arranged for and successfully held in the Library. The birth anniversaries of some saints and some special festivals were duly celebrated.

**Publications:** The Library has been publishing, after translation into Oriya, the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda. During the period under review, three books were published, and the preparation of another was taken up.

**Important Events:** A portion of the Library was extended and an upper storey added during this period at a cost of Rs. 21,943. This was formally declared open by Sri Nabakrishna Chaudhury, Chief Minister of Orissa, on 17th June 1950. At the public meetings organized on the occasion of the birth anniversary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Minister of Education, Government of India, presided in 1949, and Sri H. K. Mahatab, then Chief Minister, Orissa, presided in 1950. The Cuttack Bangiya Sahitya Parishad donated to the Library a large and valuable collection of 5,663 books.

**Needs:** The institution is in need of Rs. 20,000 for further improvement of the Library, and another Rs. 20,000 for the construction of quarters for workers, etc.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

##### REPORT FOR 1950

The Vidyapith (at Deoghar, S. P., Bihar) is a residential High School, run on the lines of the ancient Gurukula system but suited to the exigencies of modern times. The following is a short review of its activities during the year 1950.

**School:** There were 189 students, of whom 15 were day-scholars. Hindi was taught as a compulsory subject up to Class VIII. Physical training and religious education were imparted as regular features. Birthdays of saints and prophets and special festivals were duly observed. Of the 20 boys sent up for the Matriculation Examination, 16 passed, 6 securing I Division. 9 poor and meritorious students were given financial help to the tune of about Rs. 3,000.

**Extra-curricular Activities:** The Pratinidhi Samiti and the Sevak Mandali formed by the students maintained discipline, organized festivals

and dramatic performances, supervised literary activities, received guests and visitors, nursed the sick, and kept the large premises of the Vidyapith neat and clean. They also looked after the cleaning of utensils, serving of food, and such other domestic duties.

The Literary Society (Sāhitya Samiti) held debates and meetings. The *Daily Vivek* and the *Kisholoy*—both handwritten—were published regularly and successfully.

The Night School conducted by the boys was attended by about 20 cooks and servants. They were instructed in simple rules of hygiene, Indian geography, and political events of the country, and how to read and write.

The Vidyapith Bank and Co-operative Stores were managed efficiently by the students. The training in vegetable and flower gardening, tailoring, drawing, painting, leather work, and music—vocal and instrumental, continued to be imparted as usual. Inter-dormitory competition was held for cleanliness, punctuality, etc.

The library had 5,841 books and the reading room received 30 papers and periodicals. The number of books issued during the year was 3,715. The Charitable Dispensary continued to serve the surrounding villages.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, TAMLUK

##### REPORT FOR 1948-49

The following is a brief account of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Tamluk, Dt. Medinipur, West Bengal, for the years 1948 and 1949:

The Mission hospital, which has six beds, treated 34 indoor patients in 1948 and 28 in 1949. The charitable dispensary treated 6,116 and 5,222 cases respectively during these two years.

The Sevashrama organized cholera relief at four places during the period and treated 95 cases. During the Paush-Sankranti Mela at Tamluk, the Sevashrama organized first-aid, water supply, and such other relief. Occasional help in cash and kind was given to the poor and the needy.

The two Upper Primary Schools had on their rolls together 105 boys and 78 girls in 1948, and 117 boys and 89 girls in 1949.

The library contained about 3,000 books, and 3,391 books were issued in 1948 and 3,379 in 1949.

The Sevashrama, besides observing the birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and other great saints, with suitable discourses etc., organized 9 religious discourses during the two years at different places. Classes on scriptures were held in the Ashrama premises—205 during 1948 and 190 during 1949.



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## THE FALLEN ANGEL

BY ELISE AYLEN

Here let me rest a moment,  
Here by the endless sea  
Where the slow gulls are wheeling  
And crying wearily.  
Here let me lie unheeding  
Low on the windy plain,  
Earth unto earth is turning  
Dust unto dust again,  
Now while the west is burning  
Against the darkening night,  
And far, bewildering visions  
Beat on my aching sight.

Vision and despair  
And dream and longing  
Beat their vain wings  
About my breaking soul,  
And old unmeasured sorrow  
Wakes once again  
In wild remembering pain  
Formless, unspoken,  
Beyond death and life.

For I have seen the face of God  
And sung high songs  
With all his glory round me,  
Though I now  
Lie bruised and wounded  
In this weight of clay.

Here in the mystic peace  
And break of twilight  
Cleft between earth and night,  
One narrow space of light  
Left clear and bare  
As for escaping wings,  
In this still moment let me now forget  
My stain and darkness  
And my nameless sin,  
Remembering those bright spirits  
And the light that dwelt upon me  
In unbroken joy.

There is but one beauty  
To my seeking eyes,  
There is but one comfort  
Underneath the skies.







## LIBERATION THROUGH REAL RENUNCIATION

In ancient days in India there was a king, Dharmadhvaja of Mithila, who was reputed to have mastered the practice of renunciation. All the scriptures on liberation and the holy mandates pertaining to his duties as king were well known to him, and he appeared to follow all the instructions as prescribed. His senses seemed so well subjugated and his kingdom so wisely ruled that many men of wisdom desired to follow his example.

At that time there lived a woman, Sulabhā by name, who belonged to one of the foremost mendicant orders, and, as is the custom of mendicants, she wandered from place to place, practising Yoga. In her travels she heard of Dharmadhvaja and of his devotion to the austerities of renunciation. The report of his attainments came from so many sources and was so uniformly impressive that she decided to go to his kingdom and seek an interview with him.

Through her Yoga powers, Sulabha cast aside her usual form, assuming one of perfect symmetry and flawless beauty. With magic speed this exquisite lady, whose eyes were like lotus petals, reached the city of Mithila, and being a holy woman she easily gained audience with the king. The renowned monarch was surrounded by his ministers and many learned scholars. Impressed by the appearance of the mendicant, he cordially welcomed her to his court.

Though Sulabha responded to the king's greeting with a graciousness that matched his own, she surmised that Dharmadhvaja had not yet attained true liberation, though no doubt a certain power had accrued to him inasmuch as he inspired everyone in his kingdom with confidence. To ascertain the exact extent of his progress towards enlightenment, she exerted her Yoga powers and entered his mind, so that its hidden depths were revealed to her. The king did not fail to recognize what was transpiring, but temporarily ignoring this, he addressed himself to Sulabha.

'O holy lady,' he said, 'questions must be asked in order to determine another's knowledge of the scriptures, another's age and condition of birth. Therefore, since you have come to my palace, you should answer my inquiries. But I shall first speak to you of emancipation, for there is no one so well qualified as I to discuss it.

'My knowledge was gained long ago from the high-souled and venerable Panchashikha of Parashara's race, a member of a mendicant order. During one rainy season this learned monk dwelt in my palace for several months, and at that time I became his disciple. Because of his teachings, my doubts vanished and I became fully conversant with the systems of Sāṅkhya and Yoga. Panchashikha guided me agreeably to the truth by methods suited to my comprehension. At no time did he command me to give up my kingdom. My life, consequently, is spent in ruling wisely and in observing in detail the ways of conduct laid down in the treatises on emancipation.

'Know from me that renunciation of all attachments is the highest means of attaining freedom. Renunciation of the objects of the senses flows from knowledge. It is through the struggle to perfect oneself in Yoga, which arises in knowledge, that the Self is reached. Knowing the Self, one transcends joy and grief and soars beyond death. I have acquired this transcendent knowledge and so remain unaffected by the pairs of opposites, such as pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, wealth and want.

'It is when men are motivated by self-interest that their acts bring about their rebirth. Such acts are like soil saturated with water: the softened earth causes seeds to sprout. But because of the holy teachings of Panchashikha, my selfish tendencies, like seeds that have been fried in a pan, are unable to sprout. My understanding has been freed from the productive principle, desire, and no longer do my activities result from attachment



to the objects of the senses. Having seen the futility of affection and wrath, I neither love my wife nor hate my foes; I remain unmoved by companionship of any sort. My attention is fixed on the supreme Divinity alone. Happy indeed am I to have gained my own object, liberation of the soul, and I regard my state, that of ruling a kingdom and yet remaining detached from all relative existence, as superior to the state of a wandering mendicant.

'Now, the wise hold various ideas about how to obtain emancipation. Some say that it is gained through rites attended by knowledge; others, that it is gained through knowledge attended by rites; but Panchashikha taught that it is gained through pure knowledge alone. Since all men, kings as well as monks, are free to acquire pure knowledge, it is clear that a householder can become the equal of any monk. Such a householder am I, who have subjugated my senses, who am endowed with control over word, thought, and deed. All beings are apt to have certain attachments in the course of their lives, but with proper direction on the path of true knowledge, the highest can be reached regardless of outward circumstances.

'What would I gain by giving up my royal life? It is in spite of it that I have been cleansed of sins, that I live in the supreme Divinity. Let me stress the truth that outward signs and symbols have nothing to do with attaining emancipation. The outward emblems of a mendicant are the ochre cloth, the shaven head, the triple-pointed staff, and the begging bowl. The royal umbrella and the sceptre are the external signs of sovereignty. Since knowledge alone is responsible for release from the sorrows of illusion, it would appear that the adoption of specific emblems is useless. Either set of symbols can accompany the process of liberation and its attainment. To gain liberation, neither poverty nor opulence is required. Real knowledge, whatever one's condition, is the only requisite.

With all this in mind you can understand that I am free, though ostensibly I am engaged

in ruling my domains and in enjoying wealth and pleasure. Such a way of life constitutes bondage for the majority of men. In my case the shackles represented by a kingdom and its affluence have been cut away by the sword of renunciation as prescribed by the holy scriptures.

'This is the account of my attainment of the highest and the way in which it was accomplished'.

Having described his own idea of his spiritual status, King Dharmadhvaja now sought to rebuke Sulabha, for he resented her intrusion into his mind. To make his censure sharper, he gave her act a questionable interpretation, saying she had entered his body.

'O lady of the mendicant order,' he said, 'you are replete with feminine charms—youth, beauty, and an exquisite form; but I doubt very much that you have subjugated your senses. The fact that I hold you in esteem does not prevent my declaring your behaviour unworthy of the life to which you are dedicated. Does such an act befit you, who bear the emblem of mendicant life, the triple-pointed staff? That symbol is not for anyone filled with desire. It seems evident that you are unfaithful to your vows, and even I who am free must protect myself. Since you made use of supernatural means to gain access to my mind and body, your transgression is of greater proportions.

'Why have you done this? Perhaps you have a husband. If so, your lack of restraint is even more sinful. Have you a particular object, or is your conduct due to a perverted mind? If you have even the slightest knowledge of the scriptures, it must be clear that what you are doing is evil. You are a member of the foremost of all castes, while I belong to the caste which is second in rank, that of kings and warriors. Our lives are different; yours is occupied with austere practices, mine with domestic routine and affairs of State. By forcing entrance into my being, you have brought about an unnatural union of opposing types.

'Moreover, you may be acting for another king who is hostile to me. Whatever the cause



of your attempted display of superiority, you have proved yourself a wicked woman. Yoga power has made you arrogant. Jealous of my fame and strength, you seek to humiliate me and to glorify yourself.

'You have wished to examine whether or not I am emancipated. That inquiry is finished. Let me add that to gain audience with a king under a false pretext is to invite destruction. A king's power lies in his sovereignty and his conduct as a ruler. Members of the first caste, on the other hand, achieve power through wisdom based on the truth of the Vedas. Women of youth and beauty can

wield power for good only if they are virtuous. Insincerity and deceit will accomplish nothing. Be wise! Do not conceal from me your secret motives. Give me the facts about yourself. Tell me the circumstances in which birth has placed you and describe your disposition and education. To what course of conduct are you devoted? To whom do you owe allegiance? Whence have you come and to whom will you return when your business here is ended? Let me know the reason for your coming to my kingdom!'

(To be continued)

## SALVATION AND SERVICE

BY THE EDITOR

*Dharma-rajjvā vrajed-ūrdhvam, pāpa-rajjvā vrajed-adhah;  
Dvayam jñānāsinā chitvā, videhah śāntim-rcchati.*

'By means of the rope of good action one climbs to heaven, and by means of the rope of evil action one descends into hell. But the wise sever both ropes with the sword of Knowledge, become free from body-consciousness, and attain peace'.

The belief in and the desire for salvation is as universal and fundamental as the need for and the importance of service. The progress of civilization would be a meaningless process if man were told that there was no ideal goal of human effort and that all his struggles and strivings are at best needed to enable him make a living—as prosperous a one as possible—for himself, without caring for others. That life and its material advantages are meant for mere enjoyment, for getting the best pleasure out of this world by living from day to day, nay, from moment to moment, may be a profound utilitarian philosophy, but it does not go far enough. There is no gain-saying the fact of hard experience that good and evil, virtue and vice, and happiness and sufferings are ever found inseparably together. One cannot be had anywhere to the complete exclusion of the other. Even the exponents of

the view that mankind has been gradually advancing onwards—from bad to good and from good to better, and that the best, viz. the golden age of 'all good and no evil', is yet to come and will come some day—do not perhaps expect any ideal state of perfection on earth other than that in which there will be found the maximum possible good mixed with the inevitable minimum of evil, as it needs must be. Thus the terms 'a perfectly good world' or 'a perfectly happy society' are as untenable as 'hot ice' or 'dark light'. And yet man cannot rest a moment without action, without doing something that will go to enhance his happiness and reduce his suffering.

Human life is no smooth sailing. The world is by its very nature imperfect. All these infinitely differentiated phenomena in the vast universe around present before the soul visions that are alternately pleasant and unpleasant,



and man becomes happy or unhappy as his mind chooses and reacts to these. There is often more unhappiness than happiness in life only because man is more likely to choose what is temporarily pleasing to his senses rather than what is perennially good. As the Upanishad says, 'The Self-existent One projected the senses outwards and therefore a man looks outward, not within himself'. Moreover, the forces of irreconcilable opposites, which constantly assail man's equanimity, drive home the incontrovertible truth that so long as he seeks sense-pleasure as the supreme goal, he can scarcely hope for relief from frustration, tension, and conflict. For, clash is inevitable where service is motivated by a selfish urge for grabbing the greatest amount of advantage for oneself and one's family and friends even. According to the great poet-king Bhartrihari, 'Enjoyments earned by great accession of merit multiply so greatly in the case of people attached to them that they only bring them misery and peril'. How then can man earn true liberation from all pain and evil? He can do so by desiring and understanding that supreme state of perfection where there is no more duality (*dvandva*), no more clash of opposites.

Every religion promises salvation in some form or other, as that ultimate goal by attaining which man enjoys the highest and eternal bliss. As this imperishable and immortal bliss could not be had easily in this world, liberation obviously meant to convey release from all worldly suffering after somatic death and eternal life of unmingled joy in another world called heaven. It is this supreme joy, without any trace of sorrow, in other words, it is this complete cessation of or freedom from every form of evil, pain, and bondage that men have sought to achieve from the beginning of time. This idea of freedom or joy of the most exalted kind is the fruit of salvation, and once having attained this the individual then becomes identified with himself, with the ultimate Reality—eternal, changeless, blissful, beyond good and evil and pleasure and pain. Says the Upanishad,

'From Bliss Supreme (*ānanda*) verily are all beings born; having been born, by Bliss Supreme they live; and having departed, into Bliss Supreme again they enter'.

All the various manifestations of religion, in whatever shape and form they have come to mankind, have this one common goal, viz. salvation or *mokṣa*, also called liberation, cessation, *nirvāṇa*, or *kaivalya*. It is the preaching of freedom, the way out of this world, in reality, the conquest of Nature—external and internal, and the manifestation of divinity that is already in man. Seers and sages down the ages have assured mankind that real liberation (*mukti* or *mokṣa*) is the highest aim of life, the *parama-purusārtha*, liberation from everything that makes this life on earth a terrible nightmare. It is the ultimate blessedness, the outcome of the realization of man's unity with the universal Consciousness. And all human endeavour, willy-nilly, is directed towards this achievement of freeing oneself from this little prison-house of egotistic individuality and of selfish identification with superimposed adjuncts like rank, wealth, caste, sex, etc. Reiterating this fact of supreme emphasis placed on liberation, Shankaracharya says: For created beings, a human birth is difficult to obtain,—and rare is the attachment to the path of Vedic religion; higher than this is erudition in the scriptures; discrimination between the Self and the not-Self, realization, and continuing in a state of identity with Brahman—these come next in order. This kind of *mukti* is not to be attained except through the well-earned merits of a hundred crore of births. He includes the 'longing for liberation' (*mumukṣutva*) among the 'three things which are rare indeed and are due to the grace of God'. 'What greater fool is there', he asks, 'than the man who, having obtained a rare human body . . . , neglects to achieve the real end (goal) of his life?'

In attaining this ultimate goal of salvation, man has ever been called upon to devote himself to the great ideals of renunciation and service as the easiest means to such attainment. Self-sacrifice has been the one univer-



sal teaching heard from prophets and saints in every land. The earth's bravest and best have always sacrificed themselves for the good of the many and for the welfare of all. Salvation is only for those who truly and unselfishly serve others, only for those who give up everything concerning their own little self. It may be difficult for many to understand this, but it is true all the same that real happiness consists in making others happy and the more a person makes others happy by doing good to them without greed of gain the more peace and satisfaction does he himself derive. He who devotes his entire life to the realization of the unity of existence and practises same-sightedness (*samadarśitva*) towards all gradually becomes free from self-centred superimpositions and can work, without attachment, for the good of humanity, ultimately himself realizing the Highest and also enabling others to do the same. In the words of Shankaracharya, 'There are good souls, calm and magnanimous, who do good to others as does the spring, and who having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever'. Herein lies the secret of all service, of any kind whatever, by which the person rendering service becomes more blessed than the one who receives it. By serving others, unasked and unrewarded, out of one's heart's bounty,—even as the spring season infuses new life into animate and inanimate Nature, unobserved and unsought,—one helps oneself, one gains not only peace and joy in this life but also transcends the relative cycle of repeated birth and death and therefore repeated subjection to evil and pain.

Altruistic service and self-abnegation constitute the essential part of all religious discipline leading to the goal of religion. There are many who do not hanker after even their own salvation. They are the great lovers of humanity, whose life is one burning love, selfless, and who are untainted by animosity and unruffled by circumstances. With such perfect detachment, service rendered becomes

fruitful and ennobling, and, at the same time, as the lotus-leaf in water, the worker, even if he plunges himself into a whirlpool of action, continues to remain untouched by the innumerable imperfections that inevitably surround all work, like smoke enveloping fire. Thus service, which is ordinarily reckoned as originating from sympathy and pity towards those who are less fortunate or more miserable than ourselves, becomes sacred, becomes elevated and equivalent to worship, worship of God in man. Purged of its earthly taints, every act is nothing less than a sacramental offering to the Lord, and has to be performed with the utmost purity and concentration so that it may become an opening to a higher infinite self-existence and beatitude. Without the spiritual end in view, service is likely to be turned into an ostensible means of promoting self-interest and gaining name and fame. Humanists and humanitarians have often begun well but ended miserably, their noble endeavours being wrecked on the hidden rocks of subtle egoism and selfishness. Lack of faith in God and looking upon service as a bland act of social obligation or civic responsibility is quite a common feature today. Consequently service and sacrifice of the right type are rare. Hence the need for spiritual values in order to enable man to canalize along right lines his urges and emotions which seek an easy outlet for expression in and through public service, social and national.

If it is accepted that God-realization or *mokṣa* is the goal of life and that everything that one does should be such as to help and hasten the attainment of this goal, the practice of this supreme ideal of service, leading to salvation, is indispensable. Such liberation, the Hindu scriptures affirm, has to be realized and can be realized in this life, apart from the view that its realization is possible in heaven or in the hereafter. Freedom from narrowness and selfishness, from passions and prejudices, and the attainment of the bliss and equanimity of a pure and perfect way of life are possible in this world. The impediments are chiefly seen to arise from false identifica-



tion of the immaculate Self with impure and finite superficialities. Distractions come in the name of kindness, duty, service, and pity. It is the weak lower nature of man, focussed as it is on the body, the senses, and the objects of the sensate world, that creates all his difficulties. What could be the way out of this misery caused by ignorance and weakness? 'This ignorance must be eradicated', says Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Man suffers so much by ignorantly identifying himself with the body. Do you know the way out? The way out is to know Him. He is Purity, Knowledge, and Freedom itself. He is the Indwelling Spirit of all. By knowing Him, man goes beyond pain and sorrow'.

Seeing God in everything and everything in God, the man of controlled and concentrated mind views all beings in the world with perfect non-difference. This non-attachment, which characterizes the ideal of service as a means to salvation, has been formulated and systematically expounded by spiritual teachers again and again. It is to be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and even Stoicism. Referring to this ideal of non-attachment to the things of the world and attachment to God, Aldous Huxley writes: 'The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred. Non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, and social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these'. For those who do not believe in God and yet who go forward to do work with non-attachment, the task is by no means less easy, nay, it is much more difficult, as they are thrown upon their own resources. For those who believe in God the way is undoubtedly less difficult and more smooth. They renounce the desire for the fruits of work by offering them unto the Lord. All power is in His hands, and through His

command the winds blow, the sun shines, the fire burns, and death stalks upon the earth. The fulfilment of spiritual service lies in the realization of Brahman the omniscient and omnipotent ultimate Reality, which is greater and more significant than even the best things that this world can afford. The two views are not contradictory, however.

A spiritual world view is the surest (if not the only) way to stabilize the tottering edifice of civilization. All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the spiritual forces working within. The challenge of aggressive evil can hardly be overlooked or underestimated. Physical and mental sciences have placed in the hands of man immense knowledge and power, which require to be harnessed for the welfare of all and not exclusively for the selfish advantage of any particular group or State. Social, national, and international problems are there, to be sure, and none can blink the fact that there is a crying need for their solution. Or else, a catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude may overtake the world any moment, and the consequences are not too difficult to imagine, now that the world is being told more and more of the lethal and destructive efficacy of modern war weapons, both present and prospective. The call for an all-round spiritual outlook in the affairs of men and nations is not a fantastic pose, and it is neither impracticable nor unrelated to facts. The plain man seeks peace and comfort and spiritual sustenance. The leaders of nations are no exception to this. Yet, upon the leaders and upon how they behave, when confronted and influenced by passions, prejudices, and selfish interests, depends whether civilization itself will go on its precarious way with a surer and steadier step or will plunge headlong over the precipice.

The individuals who control human affairs and shape world policies are no less human than the man in the street who is bewildered at seeing their inconceivable lack of restraint and discrimination. Those who are not aware of the spiritual entity that constitutes our being and essence and who are unmindful of the call



to the Eternal find themselves victims of their own lower nature, being controlled and guided by their baser instinctual urges. The deep powers of the soul are hidden for them and they cannot bring them to bear on their work. Without God-consciousness and constant spiritual practice in everyday life and activity, right-minded action, unblemished by errors, is not easy to perform. One who abides with God a long time daily in the silence of his soul can do work for work's sake, free from the cramping influence of self-interest. 'Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-merciful One does not will it?' He is the ever active Providence, the *antaryami*, who, residing within, purifies the heart and inspires action of the noblest kind. 'By worshipping Him from whom all beings proceed and by whom the whole universe is pervaded, (by worshipping Him) through the performance of one's own duty, does a man attain perfection', says the *Gita*. The veil of ignorance which prevents the light of the Atman from shining forth in all its splendour separates man from man and man from God. Service of man, performed as an act of worship to the Lord, without the desire for petty personal gain, cleanses the heart of all impurity and brings in its wake supreme satisfaction. For, God touches our life at every point and through every variant of our actions and experiences, more intimately and more significantly than anything else.

'The relation between "this" world and the "other"', observes a well-known thinker and writer of much experience and erudition, 'is not that the "other" is something wholly foreign which is to follow upon "this" world. The "other" is with us already, seizing on "this" and transforming it, and, by that very fact, providing the element of adventure without which "this" life would sink into a monotonous routine. Eternity is not a time to come after time is over; it is

rather . . . the ever-present fire to which time is the fuel'. When work is inevitable in life, it is best always to remember the proper attitude to work. Service comes out of the fullness of heart, as a means to the assertion and attainment of the highest freedom which is the goal of man.

Ethics and morality stem directly from this fundamental psychological principle of service, —performing it as a sacrifice or worship, not so much with a view to doing good to the world as helping and elevating oneself. Every selfish action that retards the progress towards the goal of salvation is therefore unethical. Every unselfish action, performed with detachment that takes one towards liberation is moral, and ethically sound. Though it may so happen that owing to varying factors of the situation and environment the same action may be construed as unselfish under one particular set of circumstances and as selfish under another, it is more or less universally true that the consciousness of the Divine in man and the irresistible spiritual urge to freedom or liberation are the motive of service. Such service, though originating from love and fellow-feeling in the ordinary plane, becomes a potent means of God-realization when the doer learns to look upon all beings whom he serves as only God (*Śiva*) in different forms (*īva*), assumed by Him in order to afford him (the doer) opportunity to serve Him for his own good. Sooner or later one does learn that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek and work for the salvation of others. Karma Yoga, with salvation as the end and service as the means, forms one of the main paths to attain freedom eternal through unselfishness, self-abnegation, and spiritual realization. And the secret to success in Yoga lies in an abiding faith in oneself born of faith in God, which alone should shape all convictions that actually influence one's life.



# FREEDOM AND KARMA

BY DR. K. C. VARADACHARI

The problem of freedom has been a very ancient one. Ultimately whatever men may say and seek, they crave freedom alone. Whether it is the freedom that is sought through the means of *artha* or *kāma* or *dharma* or that is sought after having renounced these three Purushārthas as unsatisfactory—since they do not lead to the ultimate self-satisfaction or self-fulfilment, it is freedom that we seek. There are three senses in which men may be said to seek freedom: (i) freedom from all limitations and reactions and the cycle and chain of births and deaths, defeats and successes, or in one word Dvandvas; (ii) freedom in all the works of life, so as to possess skill, mastery, facility, and energy that triumph over all impediments in the course of the performance of any act; and (iii) freedom to all the planes of existence which would not fetter or bind us at any point and to any extent. These three freedoms are mutually complementary. But they necessitate three kinds of knowledge. The first requires of man a transcendence over the Dvandvas (*dvandvātītatva*) and when it includes transcendence over the cycle of birth and death and rebirth it means a complete attainment. Brahmajnas alone, who have attained Brahman, do not return to birth or rebirth, says one Upanishad. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, says another Upanishad. This is *mokṣa*, the *caturtha-puruṣārtha*, the highest that the Vedānta has proclaimed.

Once attaining this supreme status there is no longer any return to birth, or should we say to all birth as such, or should we also hold that non-return includes the abolition of the world of dual experience or the world process itself, or that one is indeed so thoroughly merged in or identified with Brahman that there is a virtual *nirvāṇa*. All these

views have been propounded. Even though one attains the state of Brahman, one continues to remain in the terrestrial world till such time as the past Karma has to be worked out or works itself out like a fire which gets extinguished when no new faggots or fuel are added. Jivanmukti is a case of waiting for the end, for the body to fall. Maya passes and there is nothing remaining but the Brahman. This freedom from Maya, from the world process, and from this miserable round of births and deaths is a transcending process at best, but it leaves the whole process meaningful only in the limited sense that it exists for the simple process of withdrawal from it. The process by itself, though called *līlā*, means nothing at all and leaves the divine will in creation unintelligible.

Thus we have to inspect whether freedom gets a meaning with the world and if so in what sense, even if it be a restricted sense. This is given by a consideration of what we mean when we say 'I am free to do this', 'I can do this and I need not do that', 'I can pick and choose what I like'. Every individual human being has this awareness of being able to choose, to do a thing or not to do a thing, to seek to do something and refrain from doing it or enjoying it or feeling it or even willing it. Thus, freedom from choice or of choice is available to one normally. And this is what one claims to be born to, as in the great statement of Rousseau: 'All men are born free'. A critic may well point out that this freedom at birth is indeed itself not a consulted affair, few indeed are born who have been consulted in their coming to birth and thus at the very start this claim seems to be false. We are certainly not consulted and in that sense we are not free. And indeed it turns out that all that



men finally seek is to get out of this miserable world of conflicts and precariousnesses in respect of loves and possessions and even the pursuit of righteousness which only makes life a prolific field of evil rather than good. And thus embitterment eats into the soul of the seeker. Well may Vyasa exclaim that no one hearkens to the advice of sages, who, with uplifted hands, warn man against the choosing of what is evil and pernicious! But evil itself is said to be the result of freedom in choosing the lower ends of life, the things that increase not the understanding of Nature or man but only blind men more and more to the truths of being and their own self. The right to err is said to be a most precious right. But then this error is error not because it is intrinsically capable of being determined by inspection, but only when it turns out to produce a defeat of what it seeks to affirm. Evil is freedom, but in the practice of it it refutes freedom, not only because other individuals cannot suffer this action of any individual but also because it tends to reduce the sphere of apprehension of what is free; the field of choice unusually becomes narrower and narrower. The Kantian argument that lie cannot be made universal may be analogically adduced here also with a difference that it is not necessary that other individuals also acting likewise would make evil not worth-while practising.

In the first meaning of the term 'freedom' we find it leads to the negation of the will itself, for freedom has reference more to action than to mere thought: though, to be sure, we use the phrase 'freedom of thought' to signify that we have a right to express our thoughts, thoughts which have consequences on the activities of ourselves as well as all those who have access to them. Freedom thus has to be closely associated with action. Karma is the general term that signifies the action that anyone does. But by usage we have associated so many more meanings to it which extend the meaning to so many other ingredients of an action. Thus, we can refer the term 'Karma' to action, the consequences

of the action, or the conserving elements of such action. That these are even considered to be not limited to one action but to a chain of actions, not of course or perhaps not mainly of the nature of chain-reflexes of psychology. They even assert that the explanation of the present life is itself to be sought in a chain of causes from past lives,—not perhaps the very penultimate one, which has no beginning. All these are mostly due to the inability to refer any consequence or unforeseen occurrence in this life to anything that one knows here in this present life. But though this is incapable of being proved and thus we may assert that freedom is the essence of this unpredictability of the causes of consequences, yet all this seems to demand so much of our credulity.

Let us start with the present problem, then, of our freedom in action. We have four points to take note of: Are we free when we decide to choose one among the alternatives present before us or are we not free? (It would be maintained that if we knew all the alternatives well and our knowledge were perfect we would be obliged to choose the one that our highest nature or universe of desire or reason or spirituality would dictate. In that case we would not literally be free, though it may be an euphemism. As the Russian theologian asserted, to hold that the rational is the real or the right limits the freedom to rationality and this is not real freedom. Freedom is a category of supra-rationality, not of rationality. Just as it is not right to say with the hedonist that freedom lies in enjoyment or exuberance of sense, so also freedom, when it is limited to rationality, is not correct). Thus freedom, when it is taken to be a supra-rational category, refers not to the individual in his private choice but in his choice of that which is relevant to his spiritual or cosmic or divine status or in relation to the Divine Reality. The choice or the motive which determines the choice would no longer be a private choice and in that sense the alternatives rarely have the capacity to become disjunctive except in



respect of the fundamental dichotomy of the private and the universal. Thus the choice would yet be made in action with an integral knowledge of the divine nature and will which would enhance and further the divine expression and realization in activity. Our great seers have seen in this divine ethic of motive and choice a clear indication of the integral activity of the Divine achieved in *niṣkāma-karma*: the choice is dictated by the inner light which increases the light and the joy and goes on expanding them within the Kartā. The highest motive is the motive of service of the Divine, carrying out the divine will and without hesitation to act, if need be, against all forces that appear contradictory.

The action then must have a motive and the motive force is the divine voice and choice. The means then come in for the Karma. Are these means suitable to the realization of the end? We have had long and learned dissertations on this subject. The fact remains that unless the means help the realization of the goal, or are adequate to realize the same in as inexpensive a manner as possible in respect of time and energy and accuracy and without raising difficulties or resistances, they cannot be said to be the means. But a divine action does not bifurcate the motive and the means and the end. It is only the mental mind that does this and that labours with alternatives all along the line of action. The psychologists mention about the manner anyone learns and give at least three hypotheses: trial and error being the general characteristic, these are—whole path learning, place learning, and chain-reflex learning. We shall only observe that all these reveal the fragmental approach to the problem of action. Just as in cognition all knowledge is received in bits and somehow synthesized or analysed and synthesized by the categories, and we never arrive at truth as it is in itself or the thing as it is in itself (*ding an sich*), so also in ethics of the mental mind it is a thorough fragmentalization of motives and means and the process of trial and error only leads to the application of traditional ways of action

or habitual modes of choice which conditions the freedom of the individual considerably. The only freedom for the human individual is the choice of trial and error, thanks to the environmental limitations and lack of knowledge of them. But suppose one finds the laws of matter and motion and has knowledge of the totality (geography of things so to speak), then his actions proceed skilfully. Thus Yoga is described as the skill in action (*yogah karmasu kauśalām*). Another point of great consequence to the ethics of perfection would be that whatever one does really should not provoke conflict in the atmosphere of things, but seek to resolve the conflicts and bring about harmony. There are recognized two ways by which harmony can be realized: (i) the method of liquidation of opposition has been the earliest in the field or what one calls the peace of the grave; and (ii) the method of integration and adjustment, deftly so to speak, as to convert the so-called real opposition into apparent opposition by making them co-operate in the common endeavour of a divine means. We can see that this requires an integral means of showing that the criss-cross of events and movements are capable of being fitted into a pattern not by their own mutual impingement or rationalized compromises (as sometimes practised in the well-known and notorious religious compromises), but through the divine pattern of incidence which transforms both of them to yield a divine pattern. The seer, Messiah, Avatāra, or Rishi acts in this integral form, not merely having his eyes glued to the immediate, but seeing in the immediate the perfect occasion for the incidence of the divine light and signature (*vibhūti*). Thus efficiency of means comes from a complete dedication of all to the Divine and the integral force (*cit-śakti*) to act in and through all and oneself for the realization at each stage of the goal or end in perfect awareness of the same, unfettered by any impediment either from the circumstances or environment or from other individuals equally acting but from the human level of fragmentary actions. Means cannot be



divorced from ends and ends would and could be of the same order as means or *vice versa* only when there is the unique integral perception of the oneness of the means and ends and motives. There is the fine realization of the human ethic in Gandhiji's conception of the need for the quality of spirituality in means directed towards spiritual ends. Non-violence alone can beget non-violence. Spirituality or integral activity alone can beget spiritual freedom or integral existence. Material means can do nothing here. But then, to the integral person matter itself is capable of being—because it is—spiritual when integrally used or approached.

So far, then, as to the means (*kāraṇa*)—instrumental or material. The other two causes,—the formal and final being, completely absorbed in the motive, and the purposive direction of the integral being which exceeds the private and the interested in the particular.

The consideration of the third aspect of Karma as the result or effect (*kārya*) of the action motivated and executed leads us to the most impressive part of the Karma problem, that part which alone seems to be most important to those who are afraid of Karma or action. The results of action lead to bondage. Men are creatures of their actions, not only when they become habitual actions, but also the consequences of these actions lead to certain other factors which more thoroughly than ever before bind the individual. Thus victories in action turn out to be Pyrrhic victories alone. The consequences turn out to be other than what one expected them to be. Human actions motivated by private interest and acted upon in isolation from the totality lead to repentance and distress. We all know that though a seeker after the goods of the world (*artha*) gains them, he finds that they are not the real instruments of happiness. Thus, ends taken up by men, such as *artha* and *kāma* and even *dharma*, turn out to be but means, and even then not perfect means either for the realization of perfection or freedom. Freedom is the essential goal, but even this in turn should exist not as a result that

comes out of the operations of other causes but operative from the very beginning. We are free or else we can neither strive for anything nor choose any means. Thus the end is not freedom but what freedom achieves as the culmination of its fullness. Complete freedom is the realization of freedom-instinct. All others remind us that freedom has not been got; rather, they point out that in achieving them one gets bondage alone. Thus it is that some thinkers thought that not only Kāñchana and Kāmini are the dangers or bondages but also even *dharma* (*niyatam karma*): '*Andham-tamah praviśanti ye avidyām-upāsate, tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ*'. (*Īśa Upaniṣad*, 9). Karma that is completely consecrated to itself and the goal fixed for it in action leads to bondage; though performed with freedom it leads to bondage—greater bondage as it were. The choice of a goal thus should be clearly neither personal nor private, to satisfy a fragmentary enjoyment or even knowledge or law. Thus the mystics have known that the choice of the eternal is the fundamental, for it liberates even as it achieves the goal determined. The goal-binding process, which is indeed a limitation in respect of other lesser ends, no longer operates when the eternal and the unconditioned is chosen as the goal. This they call *gopīrtva-varaṇam*. There then exists no interruption of the process of liberation or freedom through Karma that has exceeded the limitations of its objects. The *ekāntin* is a seeker after the eternal and the immortal in motive, in means, and in end, urged by the eternal; acting in and by the eternal as the means (*upāya*), one attains the eternal which is freedom. '*Na karma lipyate nare*', says the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. Such action as is dedicated to the Divine, with the knowledge that all is of the Divine and in the Divine, liberates and action itself undergoes a transformation which exceeds even the connotation given to it as *dharma* (right action).

This integration of the motive, means, and end is the first condition of Karma that would be useful in achieving, maintaining, and sus-



taining freedom from the motive and means and ends that bind in ordinary action. Thus Sri Krishna counsels the 'surrender of all Dharmas to Him' so that at no point does the individual who has thus surrendered get the feel of bondage. This is liberating Karma, for it is divine action (*divyam karma*). The integrative action is surely of the Divine Lord or Brahman, for it proceeds from the very nature of freedom, delight, and unity.

Thus the end of action, if it is Brahman, liberates rather than binds, and indeed such a choice of the eternal dissipates every fragmentary and partial movement of the consciousness that binds, restricts, and causes illusion and Ahamkāra. The greatest difficulty lies in overcoming the illusion that action should be private and personal and can only be that. This is due to the structure of the mind that perceives in segments and fragments and tries to synthesize the broken up. It is perhaps very relevant to remember Zeno's arguments about the illusion of motion and Bergson's refutation of the same as it is a difference between two types of mind, the mathematical and the intuitive. Even so Karma should not be broken up into fragments of activities of this individual and that and into parts as having four phases of—motive, means, end, and results that determine the next chain of activities or other chains of other's activities. The human mind has to be seen as limited to the ego or personal consciousness which is again tied up to particular ends of the physical, vital, and mental. Indeed that is the characteristic of the human mind; at its least it is just sensorium, and at its best it is the fragmenting instrument of the self behind which analyses and laboriously reconstructs the whole, leaving out what is indeed the very kernel of the Reality.

But still a fundamental consideration remains and has been the most clamouring for solution. The goal is not so much the binder but what it leaves behind as further consequences or traces of its effectuation, like the ever enlarging ripples in the water into which a stone has been thrown. These results are

described as the *sañcita* and the *prārabdha* Karmas, resultants of previous activities in prior lives which determine our present career and suffering. The liberated soul is said to discard both *pāpa* and *punya* of his life and of course by a moral distribution of deserts the good of the individual goes to the good ones of the world whereas the evil of the individual goes to the evil ones. Be it as this may, we can see that the human individual gathers round him these effects which seem to continue to envelop and determine the individual and we ought also to anticipate that this is not purely an individual envelope comparable to the *sūkṣma śarīra* or *līṅga śarīra* alone but also to the social which brings about events in relation to the individual, causing him to curse his fate or praise it, i.e. in one word, knows them to be *adrṣṭa*, *kāla*, or *niyati*. This close interconnection between the destiny of an individual and that of others is much the root-cause of present misery. A knowledge of previous lives is unfortunately incapable of being had by ordinary human individuals, though perhaps it ought to be available to the seers who have transcended the limits of this incarnational present. We know that Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of the past of his disciples and this is certainly not new as some such references to previous lives of Acharyas are not wanting. This transcendence of the knowledge of one life, like the transcendence of the knowledge of a single sensum makes for freedom and reveals that a large freedom had been indeed supporting and moving the Karma of the present. The determination of the present Karma is seen to be an activity of the inalienable freedom of the spirit behind, self-regulating itself in its expression.

Thus a liberated person alone can have knowledge of the freedom of the Karma that one performs and 'ought to perform' as a revelation and expression of one's true nature. An integral understanding alone can sustain an integral action, in which the motive, the means, the goal, and the fulfilment of the continuity of one's eternal being inhere.



Here are briefly analysed the phases of Karma and the implication of freedom at every point, an implication perceived and overcome by an integral consciousness or mind (Sri Aurobindo calls this the Supermind). This may go a long way in clearing certain conceptions about the relationship between Karma and Freedom.

## TOWARDS ONE WORLD

BY BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

*(Continued from the October issue)*

### THE LEAGUE AND THE UNO

'Mankind is once more on the move', wrote General Smuts, after the close of the first World War, in his enthusiasm for the League of Nations. 'The very foundations have been shaken and loosened and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march'. The League failed, and after another global war the hope of international harmony is re-embodied in the UNO. The cracks that have recently appeared in this august edifice are an ugly foreboding and a reminder of the disintegrating elements that, like molten lava in the bowels of the earth, are ever seeking an outlet in the devastating flood of war.

### FORCES UNITING AND DISUNITING EVER ACTIVE

Despite the wishes and efforts of enlightened spirits, these set-backs will recur in the scheme of One World, so long as certain fundamental facts about human nature and human relations remain unaltered. 'Two forces alternately ebb and flow and bring about all changes in the universe', according to the Greek philosopher Empedocles. 'All things coalesce into a unity in love; they all disperse apart in the enmity of strife'. The action of these two forces is not only alternate but in man's complex constitution often simultaneous. To ignore or to annul either being

out of the question, practical wisdom suggests a synthesis—a unity in dissension, a harmony amidst diversity.

### NEED OF CO-ORDINATION

The factors that divide mankind have their roots in time and space, in history and geography. They pertain to race and culture, physical environment and economic condition. Each of these is at the same time both an integrating and a disintegrating force. The problem of civilization is how not to destroy but to preserve the cohesive power in each and to counteract and restrain the dissolvent action.

### NATIONALISM—THE MODERN RELIGION

Two strong sentiments which give solidarity to masses of people are nationalism and racialism. The racial feeling has a deeper root and had a far earlier origin than the other which is only four or five centuries old in its present form. Nationalism as a group-consciousness has been evoked by the aggressive expansion of European powers—by Imperialism and Colonialism in their own continent and abroad. It is bound up with the ideas of a State and a nation and is the product of the political ideals of the West. The spread of democratic ideas has come to affect not merely persons but also the peoples of the countries. 'The spirit of nationality', it has been said, 'is a sour ferment of the new wine of democracy



in the old bottles of tribalism'. It has filtered down and formed even minor States which or parts of which have no history.

### ITS MORAL PARADOX

This acute self-consciousness lies behind the sixty odd States in which the world is divided today,—all of them armed, each according to its resources, to assert and defend its rights. And nation-States would not hesitate to descend to levels of conduct to which in their private lives men would not stoop. Under its spell reason is laid aside and crimes take on the colour of sublime virtues. Its sanction sublimates the descent to the brute level. Language and religion, traditional modes of living and common memories of the fatherland, patriotic songs and hymns of hate serve to intensify this powerful sentiment. It may well be called the religion of the modern world—with its proper symbols and rituals. 'Christianity is a far feeble motive than nationalism', wrote Lord Cecil, before the War, and other historic religions also fall into a like secondary position beside it. For, it is the outcome of the primal instinct of self-preservation in societies of men, which sees safety in the united action of homogeneous masses. It is futile to think that nationalism has served its purpose and may now be discarded like an outworn garment and that mankind may wrap itself up anew in a more modern costume.

### NO RACE WITHOUT ITS PROPER PRIDE

Race-consciousness is the raw material of which the spirit of nationality is a later development. It dates from the dawn of organized society. It signifies self-complacency and a sense of pre-eminence. There is no race perhaps that has not the pride of heroism, or a sense of its higher civilization, or a belief in its own destiny as a fitter method of salvation for mankind. The colour of its skin, the beauty of physique, stature and proportions, valour and acumen, superior arts and industries, the riches and charms of its own country—these

are so variously distributed by Nature that no race lacks one or more of these. When prowess and sharp intelligence and solidarity are joined to these factors, a feeling of superiority is naturally bred.

### DISTINCTIVE FEELING

Jewish sentiment differentiated the lesser breeds without the Law and proclaimed the everlastingness of the Grace in its own shape. In St. Paul, there is the division into 'vessels of wrath' and 'vessels of mercy'. During the Middle Ages, heathens and Christians were sharply distinguished. Manu declares that the races of the earth derived their civilization from the high-born of the land of Āryāvarta. Black and white skins have become modern substitutes for 'damnation' and 'grace'.

### THE COLOUR PREJUDICE

It is amusing to mark the exchange of compliments on the score of physical differences between races. Primitive Arabs, with their swarthy skin, considered themselves superior to the ruddy Persian and Turkish subjects. The Red Indian calls the White man a pale-face. In Japan, the hairy Ainu of Hokkaido, with bushy head and hairy chest, is looked down upon and with him are classed together the Nordic man, the Blackfellows of Australia, the Veddahs of Ceylon, the Todas of the Nilgiri hills as nearest to the apes. Colour bar may not in all cases take on an aggressively exclusive turn and lead to a *hauteur* which is intolerable. Still it is an outgrowth of human nature which may not be put by.

### OTHER PHYSICAL FEATURES

And not the colour of the skin only, but the tint and curl of the hair, its abundance or meagerness of growth, the stature of the body, the shape of the eye, the nose, and the lips—the peculiarities of physical structure which distinguish one type and mark it off from others—are potent causes of the division and dislike among men.



## LANGUAGE

A like dual function belongs to language which is perhaps the most potent of social instruments. By its use man rises above his immediate experience to general concepts which he shares with the rest of society. By this process he forms his scheme and measure of the world and 'his self comes to rest not on its individual foundations but on the whole universe'. Articulate language is indeed a greater miracle than the transmission of the human voice by telephone or wireless. But, as at the Tower of Babel, its diversity is a hindrance to the upbuilding of the goodliest fellowship after which humanity today aspires.

## SINGLE SPEECH SCHEMES

As many as 2,796 languages have so far been computed, of which India accounts for 225. These bind kin-groups and at the same time break up the unity of the race. This dissolvent action is continuous as far as it affects the masses, though international gatherings and commercial intercourse devise working solutions of the difficulty of communication. Nomads and seafarers have hitherto imparted the widest currency to their language. And yet, despite Britain's rule of the waves, the English language is spoken by not more than 250 millions.

## CAUSES OF EXPANSION AND SURVIVAL

An artificial *lingua franca* like Esperanto has no longer its early fascination. And yet the major languages tend by their innate drive to cripple and swallow up their weaker neighbours. Simplicity and expressive resource lie behind this expansive force of a language. Within the Indo-Aryan group, it has been remarked, in these respects Sanskrit and modern English stand at the opposite poles. An amazing wealth of inflexions distinguishes Sanskrit, though somewhat short in particles, and English is marked by its plenitude of prepositions, particles, and auxiliary verbs. As

a result the English verb carries an ample range of nuances. The Arabic verb, with its two tenses—perfect and imperfect, is wholly incapable of expressing the simple time-distinction between past, present, and future. Lack of relative pronouns is the greatest weakness of Turkish, which it vainly tries to make good by its gerunds and gerundives. The technique of a language would be perfect, it has been said, if it dispenses with inflexions in favour of auxiliary verbs and ultimately does away with auxiliaries also and uses un-inflected words of meaning indicating their relations by their relative order. This path has been largely followed by English and by classical Chinese to its logical end. Economy and simplification mark the improvement of the technique of language and make for its diffusion. And yet the Sinic script—the characters of which run into six figures and a single character of which may contain as many strokes as the whole of the English alphabet—has but lightly felt the weight of ages and is used by nearly a quarter of the human race. On the other side, Egyptian hieroglyphics and Sumeric cuneiform, although in advance of the Sinic script in replacing ideograms by phonograms ages ago, gave way to the Phoenicians who analysed out the consonants and the Greeks who went ahead still and did the same for the vowels as well. It would seem, therefore, that even without perfection in technique, human devices may persist through the impetus given by racial vitality.

## PROSPECTS OF HOMOGENEITY THROUGH LANGUAGE

These facts about the spread and survival of languages, which history reveals, intimately touch all attempts to effect linguistic homogeneity and to facilitate freer intercourse among races by that means. The fetters which make languages slow-paced and narrow the range of their appeal will perhaps be struck off as the thoughts of men widen with the process of the sun. The major tongues of the world will perhaps swallow up their



weaker neighbours and local variations merge in the standard speech,—the speech of the centre, of the metropolis, of the head and fount of a living culture. Simplicity of script, idiom and grammar, political influence, racial mobility and vitality, literary wealth,—each apart and all together—will tell on the future configuration of the linguistic map of the world. The promotion of unity by means of linguistic uniformity is thus a boundless vista of formidable uncertainties. Linguistic internationalists in these days fall back upon a more promising resource—a single script—the Roman—‘to demolish the roof of the cave of symbols which shut in the languages’ so that into the minds of one race another may easily have peeps and more intimate mutual acquaintance may be sped.

#### CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

But the most formidable barrier to human unity is difference in culture and economic standard between country and country. Their roots are perhaps not so deep as those of race or language, but they evoke passionate devotion. Racialists are indeed loth to distinguish races by their spiritual traits, basing as they do all their theories on absolute physical-psychical correlation. But a little inquiry suffices to dissipate the fallacy. Civilizations have recruited man-power from barbarian neighbours and even without racial transubstantiation cultural conversions have been common. Like essential inventions, political constitutions appeared over and over again independently in distant times and countries. Similar structure of the brain accounts for similar nature of the mind. Hence the uniformity of Nature in human affairs. Besides, the things of the mind easily cross geographical frontiers and will do so more particularly in the present age of quick transit and unbounded publicity.

#### ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Economic divergences between country and country are less easily assimilable.

Widest disparities are created by natural conditions and industrial structure. And standards of living make to most people the worth of life. Democracy, according to its lovers, is a wonderful thing, it is worth fighting and dying for. A like passion fired the souls of the defenders of Stalingrad in the last War. The clashes that make up the news of the day—viz. over Iranian oil and the Suez Canal—prove that the spirit of nationalism is fast taking root in the awakened East. It has been the lever of uplift in Western countries during the last century and cannot but be put to use by undeveloped Oriental States. Like means make for like ends, irrespective of latitude and longitude. If the deliverance of all mankind ‘from bondage to the glorious liberty of the sons of God’ be decreed from Heaven and by the sincere desire of those who are ahead in this race, no exception can be taken to the patriotic impulse stirring in the backward units. One World can only be composed of races of equal stature and growth. The deficiencies of one must handicap the rest and retard the progress of the whole. Pacifism is the outcome of the human instinct of self-preservation. The plane of its operation is higher and the sphere is larger, but at bottom the motive is the same as that behind racialism and nationalism. That motive is to gain the ends of social well-being by united efforts, by aggregation of units, by organization.

#### EGOISM—NATIONAL OR INDIVIDUAL—NOT TO BE EFFACED

To decry nationalism is a modern commonplace, just like the talk of uprooting egoism from human nature. Behind every human endeavour—broad or narrow—lies the urge of the ego. The national or racial ego is just the magnification of the individual self. Sanity, continuity, and consistency in life and activity are ensured by this sole thread, this sense of personality. It is the *primum mobile* of rational striving. To deny or to seek to efface national individuality—the historic personality of races—is an illogical procedure. To annul nationalism as a means of establish-



ing internationalism is an unpractical psychology. To leave out the rungs is not more easily to climb to the top of the ladder. For it is these anterior and restricted loyalties which have been and still are potent instruments of human solidarity and of social cohesion. All talk, therefore, which tends to deny the realities of human behaviour has to cease if pacifism is to make headway. It is well to reckon with the material factors of the situation instead of dissipating enthusiasm on befogging sentiments and criticisms of fancied perversities of our fellowmen.

#### OVERPOPULATION THE BAFFLING PROBLEM

The most significant of these basic factors is the explosive increase of population the world over. Speaking numerically, the last hundred years have seen humanity stand on its shoulders,—from 100 crores it has multiplied to 220 crores. If the present rate of growth, which is 20 millions a year, endures, half a century hence would register an addition of fifty per cent to the numbers of the human family. If the rate of progression itself increases with each periodical rise, the figure would mount to staggering heights and even a century and half may not elapse before the ceiling figure, which the earth, with her present resources, may lodge, feed, and clothe, is reached. This, according to statisticians, is 500 crores.

#### FROM THE HAVES TO THE HAVE-NOTS

Production has not kept pace with procreation, with the exception of United States, Soviet Russia, Australia, Canada, and Africa. The wail that rises from the countries of the world points to the acute and growing shortage in food-stuffs. The generous aids from the heaped-up plenty of U.S.A. for the economic rehabilitation of the stricken countries have not given them self-sufficiency, nor hold out the prospect of such in the near future. For, while in production the proposition is one of slow-paced recovery and reclamation, reproduction proceeds at a faster

rate and outstrips the increase in the means of subsistence. No international agency has yet been potent enough for an equitable distribution of the earth's produce between the surplus and deficit countries. Not even from motives of gain, which have all along guided demand and supply, would some of the affluent States part with their excess for the relief of regions of scarcity. Only recently, when the free flow of their cheap goods to the world market was solicited by the Japanese, permission was withheld lest the prices of manufactures, which held the market, should be affected. Thus exploitation still rules the world of trade and commerce. There is no sign yet that power is prepared to forgo its advantages even while millions of the weak are in jeopardy of their lives. These stark facts are distressing in all conscience, but they cannot be altered so long as a change of heart is not effected in the dominant races that enjoy an affluence of the world's goods. The problem of human progress by co-operative existence is, therefore, mainly psychological and ethical—a mental preparation of those alive to it and having both ability and resources for its solution. And yet man thinks it is merely a question of increasing production by utilizing the untapped energies and powers of Nature.

#### ATOMIC POWER AND ANCIENT TRUTHS

Sometime ago President Truman, in a rather incongruous context, uttered the hope that the Atomic Engine will be a Power Plant for Peace—producing electricity for factories, farms and houses. It was the occasion of the keel-laying of the Atomic Submarine *Nautilus*. 'It could set man free from servitude to geography and climate', he said. 'It would be a means to better life than the people of the world ever had before. With the tools of modern science, of which the most marvellous can be this new thing—atomic energy, and with the ancient moral truths of religion and philosophy, mankind can build a new world in which poverty and war and hunger are banished once and for all'. How far this



dream will come true time alone can prove. It is expressed by many knowing persons that at the present rate of growth, in seventy-five or even fifty years another 100 crores may be added to the world population. Between production and reproduction, therefore, human welfare today rests perilously poised. The course of civilization has been in the main a resultant of these two forces—the hunt for food and the impulse to propagate, in which the latter has throughout outstripped the former.

### LIVE AND LET LIVE

Economic equilibrium was never the achievement of the growing command over Nature alone, but of energetic self-disregarding virtues which yearned and strove for social justice, equality, and happiness for all.

These are the ancient moral truths of religion and philosophy. To cordon off the seats of plenty and prosperity—favoured spots of the earth—and to seek security for these on the basis of peace in the rest of the world, to have atomic power ready for immediate destructive uses, while prospecting for its employment as a power for future melioration, is an anomaly of thought and the source of the present instability in international relations. The commonest pathetic fallacy views the world as too small to hold both one's opponent and oneself. The hope for One World demands the acceptance, sincere and unreserved, with all its consequence, of the simple maxim, 'Live and let live'. A simple maxim, indeed, but one which implies a mental revolution in men and races who are to guide the destiny of mankind.

(Concluded)

With acknowledgements to A. Toynbee's *A Study of History*.

## THE CULTURE OF EMOTIONS IN MYSTIC LIFE

BY DR. RAJ NARAIN

A culture of emotions seems to be the purpose of the Buddhist contemplative exercises known as the Sublime Occupations (*Brahma-vihāras*). The Sublime Occupations consist in the reflection on the four Sublime Moods or Illimitables, to wit, friendliness, pity or compassion, sympathetic joy, and indifference. All these moods are included in the traditional list of thirty-eight or forty subjects of meditation.

The technique of the Sublime Occupations may be outlined somewhat as follows: The *Yogāvachāra* takes up the sentiments of friendliness, pity, and sympathizing joy severally, and commencing with known individuals, he proceeds to suffuse or pervade them with these sentiments. From individuals

he proceeds to suffuse these sentiments in groups, ever widening till the whole world of sentient things is included. The fourth sentiment, indifference, cultivated similarly, serves to compose and regulate the preceding sentiments. It arises from the preceding three in the same fashion in which one grows indifferent to a relative when he has been in his company for a long time, and to whom, however, he had paid great attention and whose presence had been a matter of great rejoicing when he had come from afar off, after a long separation.

The *Nikāyan* formula for the Sublime Occupations is as follows: Come ye, Bhikkus, expelling the five hindrances and attenuating the heart's defilements by insight; abide ye in the suffusing of one region of earth with a



consciousness accompanied by love; thence the second region, thence the third, the fourth. And thus aloft, below, across, the entire world, all and all that are therein do ye continue to suffuse with a loving consciousness abounding, lofty, without anger or ill will'.<sup>1</sup> This is repeated for each of the remaining three sentiments.

The process of the Sublime Occupations can be better understood if we describe in detail the practice of one of the Sublime Moods. We may take up friendliness for the purpose. Now this is explained as follows. Just as father and mother have affection for their only child; have always friendly feelings for it, and have the good of the child at their heart, so one should love all beings and desire their welfare. Before, however, one starts cultivating the sentiment of friendliness, one should first see the disadvantages in ill will and the advantages in forbearance. The cultivation of friendliness should start with one's own self, not with an enemy, or a neutral person. Then gradually it should proceed to one who is dear, one who is neutral, and lastly an enemy. If the Yogāvachāra cannot have the feelings of friendliness for a neutral, he should wait for some time and find out the defects in himself. He should be ashamed of himself. He should say that the Buddha practised friendliness even upon an enemy, while he himself could not practise it upon a neutral person. He should be able to think of the neutral's good qualities only, as when one takes water one removes the dirt from it and then takes it. Gradually he should extend the feelings of friendliness to all people in one direction, then to those in the second, third, and so on to the whole world. Friendliness is not practised upon a dead person, because the feelings of friendliness having significance for and reference to living things alone, cannot be developed from reflection upon a dead person.

As helps to the emancipation of the heart

<sup>1</sup> *Samyutta-Nikāya*, V. 115 f. Quoted in *Buddhist Psychology*.

and mind from the five hindrances and the ten fetters, the Sublime Occupations are not recommended for those who believe in agreeable things. They are not good for them, just as fatty and oily things are not good for those who have a preponderance of phlegm in their humours. They are, on the other hand, suited for those who believe in disagreeable things (*doṣa-carita*), for they are an antidote for disagreeableness produced by the sufferings of beings.

A practice similar to that of the Sublime Occupations is found in the Yoga system of Patanjali. As a matter of fact, the Sublime Occupations, according to the testimony of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 'were not originally, or at least not exclusively, Buddhist'.<sup>2</sup> It seems that the *Yoga-Sūtras* and Buddhism draw from a common source in so far as the culture of emotions is concerned.

*Yoga-Sūtra*—I.33 lays down the following in regard to the culture of emotions. 'By the cultivation of friendliness towards happiness, compassion towards pain, joy towards merit, and indifference towards demerit, the Yogin should attain the undisturbed calm of the mind-stuff'.<sup>3</sup> Vāchaspati Mishra's commentary on the Sutra runs as follows: '... when towards those who are happy the mind-stuff cultivates friendliness, that is, cordiality (*sauhārdyam*) then the taint of envy ceases. When towards those in pain, the mind-stuff cultivates compassion, that is, a desire to destroy pain in another as if it were his own, then the taint of a desire to injure others ceases from the mind. When towards living creatures whose disposition is meritorious the mind cultivates joy, i.e. gladness, then the taint of jealousy ceases. When towards those whose disposition is demeritorious, the mind cultivates indifference, i.e. neutrality, then the taint of wrath ceases. And then, after the qualities made of *rajas* and *tamas* have ceased, the white quality made of *sattva* comes into being. One may say he becomes endowed

<sup>2</sup> C. A. F. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist Psychology*, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Woods: *Yoga System of Patanjali*, p. 71.



with a superiority of *sattva*. Where there 'can properly said to be' (*pakṣa*) a restriction of the fluctuations, his mind-stuff, because its true nature is undisturbed calm, becomes undisturbedly calm. And when undisturbedly calm, by means which are to be stated (Book II. 1 f.), it becomes single-in-intent, and gains the stable state. But if there is not cultivation of friendliness and the other feelings these means are not adequate for stability'.<sup>4</sup>

The cultivation of emotions is especially noticeable in Bhakti Yoga. In contradistinction to the Way of Action and the Way of Knowledge, the Way of Devotion is grounded in the emotional life of the mystic; it is the Path of Love. Of the two types of Bhakti, *rāgānugā* and *vaidhī*, the former delights in emotional experiences. The Way of Devotion is generally oriented to a religious personality, be it of Rama or Krishna or Jesus or any local luminary. In this respect, the Way of Devotion differs from Buddhism which aims at the realization of *nibbāna*, and from Raja Yoga whose goal is the attainment of Isolation (*kaivalyam*).

The culture of emotions in the Way of Devotion has two aspects. First, the devotee assumes towards the Object of his devotion (*iṣṭadevatā*) an attitude of personal relationship. The devotee may look upon Him as a Lord or Master, as a son or father, as a playmate or companion, a friend or a lover. In case the object of devotion happens to be feminine, the devotee may regard Her as a mother, a female companion, a beloved, and so on. All such attitudes are elaborately discussed in the classics of Bhakti literature. Their common feature is the establishment of an intimate personal contact with the Object of devotion. The relationships are conceived of in terms of family or social relationships.

Having established a personal relationship with the Object of devotion, the devotee directs his emotions towards Him. He may turn his anger or joy upon Him. He may laugh or weep with Him, sing or dance in

order to please Him. He may languish in the agony of His absence, shed pools of tears at His displeasure. This is the second aspect of the culture of emotions in mystic life. And it is in this aspect that emotions proper come into full play. This is borne out by the lives of eminent devotees like Chaitanya, Surdas, and Tulsidas.

What role does the culture of emotions play in the economy of mystic life? In order to understand the role, it is necessary to present a brief account of the psychology of mystic life. Psychologically considered, mystic life is a process of transformation of bodily and mental states. Mental life, in the broadest sense of the term, includes perceptions, feelings, and memories. All these possess meaning, refer to external objects, and are describable in terms of other mental processes. Mental contents are sustained by attitudes, governed by temperament and dispositions, and integrated or organized by the ego. Conscious mental contents are, moreover, enveloped in fringe-consciousness, and modified by the sub-conscious levels of consciousness. The transformation of bodily and mental states in mystic life possess a twofold aspect: first, a withdrawal from the external environment, the normal psycho-social milieu, in which an individual moves and has his being; and second, a turning towards the things of the Spirit. The process of withdrawal is an actual process, and not merely a subjective abstention, though the latter too accompanies it. Mystic discipline aims at providing necessary and helpful conditions for the transformation of bodily and mental states in mystic life.

Now both the Buddhist Jhāna Yoga and Patanjali's Raja Yoga aim at so transforming the emotional life of the mystic that he can grow indifferent to pleasure and pain alike. Normally if a man wins a fabulous sum, he is overjoyed; if he loses a dear one, he experiences deep sorrow. The Yogi however aspires to look upon both the events with indifference and undisturbed calm. This cannot be accomplished at once. Hence the need

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.



for cultivating emotions, quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Quantitatively, the emotion is cultivated in the first instance upon living beings, but later on upon groups, ever widening till the whole realm of sentient things is included. Qualitatively, not one but four different emotions are cultivated. The sentiments of friendliness, pity, joy, and equanimity have meaning only with reference to persons; they are action-attitudes towards them. They are not the normal action-attitudes towards living things. Envy of the happy lot of others, the desire to inflict pain, feelings of jealousy towards those who are better off than us, and wrath upon those who are demeritorious are the common action-attitudes towards living things. The cultivation of their opposite action-attitudes is intended to bring about a transformation in their action.

In Bhakti Yoga the role of culture of emotions is even more significant. Inasmuch as devotion is oriented towards a religious personality, it has a greater affinity to the life that we normally live. The ideal of nescience or isolation is not easily understood by the man in the street. The ideal is too abstract for his mental outlook and development. In the Way of Devotion, he has merely to re-orient his life of emotions and feelings to a different order of facts, namely, to a world of

spiritual things and beings. He is not required to starve his senses or to transform his emotions to a colourless state. He has only to turn to another set of facts, in and through which he can satisfy his life of sense and emotions.

Emotions, thus, help the devotee to break away from his normal mundane existence, and to adjust himself to an ideational plane. Psychological studies of emotions tell us that emotions are the springs of action; they determine our dispositions and temperament; and they are more important in ego-organization than the intellect. Emotions are also correlated with volitional acts. If, therefore, they are cultivated in succession, they can enable one to break away from the normal psychosocial milieu. The emotional exuberance exhibited in religious dancing seems to subserve such a purpose.

The cultivation of emotions, moreover, gives sublimated satisfaction to the devotee. The devotee is able to continue the pleasures arising from the satisfaction of emotional life, by projecting his emotions and feelings upon objects in a world peopled by his imagination and enriched by the lore of traditions and myths. The assumption of a personal relationship makes the sublimation easier and more effective; it gives a semblance of reality to the ideational world.

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## THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

Philosophy is similar to language, art, and poetry in one very important sense. It is the expression of the whole individual carrying the impress of the national genius. It is coextensive with the whole life of the individual, a life that sums up the rich heritage. Despite all that Platonism and Hegelianism have done, the British genius continues to remain empirical. The Prussian spirit dominates all the schools of German philosophy.

An element of Platonism constitutes the vital core of Greek thought. And ancient Indian philosophical schools, whatever may be their leanings, have drawn upon the Upanishadic thought. All these are the reactions of the various heritages and as such represent certain profound aspects of truth; and an aspect of truth is not a coat that we can put on and put off. It is an integral part of human life. Hence we cannot put on an alien cloak and



feel comfortable and confident in our philosophical conclusions. We cannot also attack one alien school of philosophy from the standpoint of another alien school in so far as we have not assimilated it to the tradition we inherit. We may parade as Hegelians, as pragmatists, or as Marxists, but our conclusions will not be our own, and a philosophy lives or falls by the depth of the experience that it presupposes in us. It is this fact that accounts for the paucity of original and systematic thinkers in modern India.

Philosophy is the expression of the inner urge to know. For, man, in spite of all other definitions to the contrary, is a being determined by an omnivorous curiosity, a curiosity to know and understand the rich complexity of the world. Such an innocent beginning is fraught with very serious consequences, for the inquiry grows organically like a sorites, and it is not unlikely that philosophers themselves, like the poets, may not know where the argument leads. They have to go where the wind listeth; and the wind, true to its nature, is determined by human interests, by the interests of finite minds. These interests, however rational and progressive we may be, are determined by our heritage and environment, by the diverse needs of our temperament and life.

Philosophy is primarily concerned with a theoretic enquiry. But any theory is only an expression of the individual's diverse reactions to the varied experiences and to the influx of the events. As such a theory divorced from the facts of life remains abstract and bookish. If we were to lay any claim to be the students of philosophy, we cannot afford to be true only to the letter of the theory, for the spirit of the theory is of supreme importance. This spirit is always realized in action. And as long as theory and practice do not go hand in hand, so long we can have no understanding of life itself.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* observes in a characteristic manner: *Satyam vada. Dharmaṁ cara. Svādhyāyān-mā pramadah . . .*

(I. xi. 1). This is an address given to the disciple after he has completed his educational career, a career which was not confined to a single subject. Here the preceptor wants the disciple 'to speak the truth, to act according to Dharma or the principle of life, and to pursue the field of study'. He is not satisfied with mere positive injunctions. He wants him not to give up truth, not to violate the principle of Dharma, not to neglect his own study. These three duties sum up what we have been insisting so long. They refer to the clear pursuit of knowledge, and to the devotion to all theory and practice. A mere theoretical knowledge alone is of no avail.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we read the story of Shvetaketu and his aged father. When Shvetaketu returned from his educational training, his father put him a question: Whether he had learnt about That by which what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, etc. This is That which one can and does know from experience proper. But Shvetaketu was an adept in theory, and his masters had tutored him in all theories divorced from life, and he necessarily could not give the right answer. Thereupon, when the boy came with a request, the father began to initiate him into the mystery of the world, ultimately leading him to the great Truth contained in the celebrated words, '*Tat-tvam-asi*'. This integration of life with thought is the essence of a living philosophy. The moment we lose our hold on the rude, rugged facts of life, that very moment we lapse into a dry scholasticism reminiscent of the Navya Nyāya and of the medieval European thinkers.

There is an old saying that philosophy deals with silly questions which the foolish boys and girls put out of a sheer love of mischief, and which wise men fail to answer. There is an element of truth in this statement. In an age of progress, it is only philosophy that has the cheek to tell us and convince us of a different tale. It is never the business of philosophy to solve problems. For, the



problems which we face here are so immediate and eternal that no solution is possible. These problems are not like the scientific ones. Even in the sciences, we are faced with a variety of explanations for one and the same problem. Thus the explanations offered for the movement of light, for the evolution of the species, for movements inside the atom are some of the baffling things. No doubt at some period in the history of man, there can be found a satisfactory explanation for these. But even then the possibility of a different explanation cannot be ruled out of question. This diversity is bound to be there as long as the human element is not ruled out of all scientific observation. Even granting for the sake of argument that one single explanation for one single problem is there, has science explained the universe and its problems? We are no nearer the solution in many fields of enquiry.

On the other hand, science has made the universe more and more complex and mysterious. New problems have arisen and new questions have come in their trail. The story is the same with philosophy. No unalterable and eternally valid conclusions can be given for the pressing problems of life; for, such a thing will stultify the growth of philosophy. It is the duty of philosophy to raise problems, to focus our attention on them, and to stimulate our outlook and insight. This is the ideal of all great philosophical texts, and our best examples are only the Upanishads and the *Dialogues* of Plato. We have here regular conversations, representing the actual speeches of the philosophers and revealing intimately their personalities. They aim at giving us facts, not theories and conclusions. We have usually the discussion of a problem, the exchange of views, a deeper understanding of the difficulties, and pregnant suggestions. The rest is given to the choice of the individual. He has to fall back on his experience. The emphasis thus falls on the process, on a deep and penetrating study and understanding of the great problems of human life. The profound glimpses into the nature of Reality

are all that we have in these Upanishads and the *Dialogues*. More than this we do not require, for everything else depends upon us, on our experiences.

In the third Valli of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* we have the story of Bhrigu, the son of Varuna. Bhrigu approaches his father with the request to teach him about Brahman; and the father gives him a formula which appears to be very simple and yet pregnant with deep thought. This formula offers a list of six things, viz. matter (*annam*), vital life-force (*prāṇam*), the visual and auditory objects of perception (*cakṣuḥ* and *śrotram*), mind (*manas*), and speech or thought (*vācam*). These are things to be known and experienced since it is the experience of the nature of these that gives a clue to the nature of Reality. And Shankaracharya speaks of them as the gateways to Reality (*Brahmopalabdhi sādhanāni* or *Brahmopalabdhyau dvārāṇi*). They constitute the five 'Koshas' or sheaths through which the development of the individual takes place. Bhrigu learns the nature of *anna* or matter, and feels that he has not felt the nature of the Real, and thus approaches his father, who directs him again to do Tapas.

This word 'Tapas' is one of the much misunderstood terms, and hence needs a careful understanding. The *Mahābhārata* tells us (Shānti Parva, 250.4) that the unity of the mind and the senses in the interests of a higher principle constitutes Tapas. It is, in other words, concentration or meditation. This is no theoretic activity, but a highly articulated experience that calls into play the finer moods of consciousness. As long as the principle underlying the phenomenal world is not revealed, as long as the knowledge of man is dependent on the causal laws, so long there is no ultimate knowledge and there is no real or valid experience that can offer an abiding satisfaction to the abiding self. Thence Bhrigu proceeds to investigate the nature of *prāṇa* followed by an inquiry into the nature of *manas*.

But as the *Kena Upaniṣad* puts it (I.1): 'By whose will directed does the mind proceed



to its object? At whose command does the *prāṇa*, the foremost, do its duty? At whose will do men utter speech? Who is the god that directs the eyes and ears?' So there must be something which can instigate the mind or life-force or speech. There must be some principle in the universe that can set these in motion and control their interplay. Thus we read in the same Upanishad (I.3): 'The eye does not go thither, nor speech, nor the mind. We do not know It; we do not understand how anyone can teach It. It is different from the known; It is above the unknown'.

Hence Bhṛigu proceeds from *manas* to *viññāna* and from *viññāna* to *ānanda*. With *ānanda* we are at home in the realm of experience, and this experience offers the clue to the knowledge of Reality. It is the duty of philosophy to focus our interest on these problems. Hence it is that at times our outlook may even coincide with that of the great thinkers of the past; for each one of us carries with him a pocket edition of the universe which in reality is only a way of life.

The object of philosophy is then the whole universe, along with all the activities, sciences, theories, and values that exist therein; for philosophy attempts to face the universe as a whole, in which case we cannot afford to treat that which is as if it *were not*. As the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* puts it: 'By the knowledge of the One everything else becomes known' (*Eka viññānena sarvam viññātam bhavati*).

We cannot ignore or dismiss anything before bestowing our thought on it. There is a real element of value in the whole historic process. As Aristotle puts it, 'It came into being for the sake of life, but is for the sake of Good Life'. There is a great plot at the very core of our existence, and it is a plot

serving the interests of a sublime play, a play which may turn out to be a tragedy to some and a comedy to others. And civilization itself is a process by which a group or society lifts itself above the struggle for life, and controls its environment. In this task we get a real enlightenment from a deep study of mankind which is a close study of human history. History will tell us of things that had the privilege of taking place long ago. But great works of art and philosophy are the very things that happened. These are no doubt the imperfect expressions of our own yearnings and spiritual values. Yet philosophy and literature present the great endeavour to realize perfection in these spheres. With such a stupendous task on its shoulders, philosophy never lays a claim to the solution of any problem. For, all of us pine for that moment of life to which we can say deliberately, with Faust, 'Verweile doch, du bist so schön' ('Stay, thou art so beautiful').

We come across such happy and felicitous moments when we go through the philosophical and literary classics; and it is through these works that we relive those moments. We want to preserve them from falling, from vanishing, from us. And so, we begin understanding and interpreting them. It is thus that we minister to the great spiritual adventure of the human race. It is an adventure that constantly renews our experiences and observations, and makes us organically united to the spiritual heritage of our ancestors. It is a heritage drawn from life. And in so far as we ignore this heritage and build our systems of thought on alien doctrines, our systems too will appear outlandish and profane. It was this principle that compelled our ancestors to speak disapprovingly of the non-Vedic schools of philosophy.

(To be continued)



# THE QUEST FOR VALUES

BY DEVABRATA SINHA

Ours is an age in which human intelligence has achieved miracles through its increasing control over the forces of Nature and by harnessing them to man's own ends, in which the mysteries of the natural world are being gradually reduced to their bare simple elements, and in which large perfection has been attained in machinery and mechanistic skill. Yet, thinking people do often look upon it as one hostile to human values. And, that is why it is said that the values of life are at stake in our present-day civilization.

Let us ponder a little over values themselves—their nature, meaning, and implications. Certain questions seem to be inextricably bound up with the intellectual and spiritual adventure of man, questions that imply man's attitude to life and things and thereby involve values.

Now, a very striking feature about values is their transcending the merely intellectual endeavour of man. Indeed, the emergence of values pertains to that aspect in man that is distinct from pure reason and akin to the volitional and emotional side of his nature rather than the intellectual. Thus, the philosophy of values that is so dominant in modern thought, rising as a reaction from intellectualism, is most directly related to Kant's doctrine of the primacy of 'practical reason'. According to Kant, it is only by subordinating theoretic thought to the unconditioned will that we can attain a loftier harmony. So, there appears a divergence of level. Consequently, comes the division of the natural sciences and the human sciences of spiritual values.

To consider the situation of value or axiological situation, one point seems clear, that is, the subject-object implication. Thus, even for S. Alexander, the modern realist, for whom

values are just emergents in time within the common matrix of space-time, values arise from 'amalgamation of mind with objects'. Because, values cannot be divorced from reality and they are not to be reduced to mere reality. Values apart from the real are fictions; but the unique essence of value must somehow be linked to the subjective factor of 'appreciation', which has been so emphatically recognized by Alexander. Again, as R. W. Perry, another modern realist, aptly suggests, the being of things is independent of their possessing value, though their possessing value is not independent of consciousness. With all his realistic motive, Perry yet emphasizes the necessity of the subjective factor of desire for a thing acquiring value.

At the outset we are impressed by the fact that values are intrinsically bound up with man's reflective attitude. The gradual inwardization of the mind brings about the emergence of values. So the Upanishads speak of the seeker after truth and bliss as turning his eyes inwards, as it were (*āvṛttacakṣuḥ*).

We could certainly find a key to the genesis of values in what Rabindranath Tagore aptly calls 'The Surplus in Man' (in his 'Hibbert Lectures', entitled *The Religion of Man*). The realm of values is an ideal realm, far transcending the natural, the vital, and even the mental. The animal preoccupation with the merely vital functions can no longer bind man, who is, above all, endowed with the peculiar quality of mental reflection. Man's energy is not exhausted in meeting the bare necessities of his vital nature. And, coming to the domain of mind and intellect, it is found that even the intellectual satisfaction cannot meet the still deeper demands of his integral being. Transcending the strictly logical and ratiocinative process of man's



reasoning, surpassing the demands of his analytic reasoning, rises 'the realm of ends'—the eternal and ideal archetypes of values. In *Atharva-Veda* we find an excellent discourse on this 'surplus in man' (*ucchiṣṭa*), pointing to the repository in man, conserving values. Therein is indicated the unique character of Man the Eternal (*sanātanam-enam-āhur-utādyā syāt punarnavah*). Man, in his persistent endeavour at creative self-realization, seeks for freedom in newer and newer forms.

There is, again, the concept of personality, the growing sense of which goes along with the awareness of values. The dawning of this sense of personality in man—a sense that he is a conscious integrated centre of the universe, striving to attain harmony and self-fulfilment within himself, and separate from and yet linked to the environment,—is perhaps the most significant stage in the history of man's mental evolution. The inner being of man that expresses and fulfils itself in intercourse with the world and society, is considered an end, to the realization of which all our mental and vital activities are subservient. It has been stressed by teachers of humanity from the earliest times down to the present-day that man is to be viewed as an end and never as a means,—the well-known postulate of Kant's ethical doctrine.

Personality stands for a category—ideal and ultimate, so far as the philosophical standpoint is concerned—that is not strictly amenable to scientific analysis. It implies a whole that is not merely composed of several empirical features of man—such as the biological, the psychological, and the sociological traits, but an essence that transcends them all. In this connection, we may refer to the modern psychological standpoint that goes to define human personality as the sum total of all the traits of an individual, largely determined by heredity and environment, besides the intra-organic processes. But such a psychological definition, however empirically useful it may be, does not seem to do justice to the whole man, the essential man. As Alexis Carrel,

in his famous book *Man, the Unknown* remarks, 'In man, the things which are not measurable are more important than those which are measurable'. After all, it is through creative self-expression and not by any amount of abstraction or formal interpretation that the unifying principle in me finds its perfection in its unity in others', as Tagore has urged.<sup>1</sup> To the fuller vision of man, Tagore suggests, the world of reality is revealed in the light of his inner illumination and no longer remains an impersonal, abstract truth.

Now, it is religion, taken in its universal aspect, that most conspicuously, signifies the search for values in man's sense of the Infinite. Hoffding's famous definition of religion as 'the faith in the conservation of values', hits upon the ultimate philosophical bearing of the religious consciousness. In its innermost essence, religion is concerned not so much with the comprehension as with the valuation of existence. The tendency in modern thought has been to define religion more and more in terms of values, stressing on the purposive element in the religious consciousness, that grows with the advance from the primitive religion of tribal worship to the gradual appreciation of ideals that are, more or less, basal to the nature of Reality. The transition from the ordinary anthropomorphic religion to the truer religion of value has been well brought out in the illuminating remarks of Bernard Shaw: 'Man, walking humbly before an external God, is an ineffective creature compared to Man exploring as the instrument and embodiment of God, with no other guide than the spark of divinity within him'.<sup>2</sup>

The position of Advaita Vedānta in this respect is rather singularly significant. Here, values, ethical and religious, seem to constitute not ends in themselves but potent means to the ultimate end. Ethical distinctions as well as religious sentiments, thriving upon

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore: *Personality* (Ch. on 'The World of Personality').

<sup>2</sup> G. B. Shaw: *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her search for God*, Preface.



a sense of distinction, prevail only in the empirical sphere and have no ultimate standing from the metaphysical point of view. Man's supreme goal in life, his highest end (*parama-puruṣārtha*), is Liberation (*mokṣa*). This, is, indeed, the one and only end, the End that implies the culmination of all human processes and the absolute identification with the Real. Are we then to discard all moral and religious values that are so ardently cherished by man? Vedanta never discards ethico-religious disciplines; it fully recognizes its importance for the striving human being. A Personal God (*Īśvara*) is there for the sake of worship (*upāsana*) which ennobles the finite mind. Nevertheless, the external religious consciousness, as it is ordinarily understood, moves in the realm of 'ignorance' (*avidyā*) where distinctions prevail, concealing the vision of Reality. The realization of the absolute oneness of Self (*ātmaikatva*), the high-water mark of Perfection, is the moving spring of Vedantic discipline'. Advaita involves a perfectionistic ethics where the concept of *śreyas* (true well-being), that comes down to us from the Upanishads, is the guiding star. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I.ii.2) declares that the wise man (*dhīra*) discriminates between that which is 'good' (*śreyas*) and that which is 'pleasant' (*preyas*)—both of which come to a man—and chooses the former in preference to the latter. Thus, while self-realization is the absolute good, ethical norms and religious virtues are only relatively so. When the highest personal requisites have been attained through moral discipline and religious devotion and practices, the pathway to the Supreme Goal opens. Maurice Maeterlinck, the modern mystic-author, echoes almost the same idea when he says (in his last book *The Great Beyond*), 'Our life in the Great Beyond will start at the highest point we will have reached in our earthly life'.

So, we see how the Vedantic appraisal of values in their common import is only a corollary to its deeper demand for 'a Religion of Truth' that is rooted in spiritual inwardness. The Advaita Vedanta has thus helped man to approach God in terms of truly spiritual value, shorn of weakening associations. The Advaitic approach to integral realization cannot stop short of the identity of the self and Reality, which, at the same time, would bring about the highest fulfilment of man's whole being. The supreme Oneness of Spirit is indeed the highest value from the point of view of the individual striving to attain it; once attained, it is no more a value in itself. If we bring in the criterion of value which lies in 'appreciation', the Vedantic goal cannot be affirmed as a value, in so far as it transcends all distinctions whatsoever, leaving no room for any subject to evaluate it. Rather, value here merges with Reality itself. Reality reflects value from the point of view of an individual (*jīva*), value that the aspirant approaches through stages of Vedantic discipline. And the Jivanmukta, the supremely enlightened and liberated (but still embodied) soul, who continues to work for the good of the world and for the conservation of the social order (*loka-sangraha*), symbolizes the highest value, the living ideal for men to follow.

Values are reflected in our approximation to the ultimate goal. And, as integrated to our inner life, they are real and cannot be regarded as illusory. They are essentially linked to the demands of our nature—intellectual and spiritual. The metaphysical search for the ultimate Reality or the 'First Principle' may, in the long run, transcend the realm of values, but does not cancel them. The quest for values marks the pathway to Reality.



# RELIGION, THE HOPE OF THE MODERN WORLD

By R. D. SHARMA

It may sound somewhat strange to take up and defend the cause of religion in this age of science and industrial achievements; but the value of religion as one of the most potent factors for achieving world peace can hardly be overestimated. It has become customary with us to eulogize the unique power and glory of science in making our lives more comfortable. In doing so we lose sight of the fact that mere material comfort and cultural refinement involve only one side of the complex human nature. Science, for instance, does not reach the sphere of motives and is still a stranger to the concepts of right and wrong in ethics on the study of which human welfare and happiness ultimately depend. Even such problems as famine, disease, and starvation have not been solved by scientific technology, not to speak of integrating man with himself. Science has indeed given us power and control over material Nature, but it has woefully failed to probe the mystery of life and the universe; it has told us nothing about the ultimate goal of life and endeavour. Is it possible, then, to hope for the salvation of the human race through science? Rather, we have to lament with Wordsworth:

‘Rapine, Avarice, Expense—

This is idolatry, and these we adore’.

At present we are living in a world rent by misunderstanding, bitterness, and strife. The modern world knows too much of ‘besieging a town’ or ‘setting an army in army’, which was the demand of Aurangzeb from his tutor whom he blamed for having kept him completely in the dark about political tactics and diplomatic manoeuvring. We are witnessing everywhere a revolution—revolution not only in society, but also in the thought world, resulting in an all-round change in the political, social, and

spiritual life of man. The tempo of life has incredibly increased. The vast energies of nations are being employed in extending man’s power over his surroundings; their machines, armaments, and organizations are multiplying at a rapid rate for offensive and defensive purposes. Self-interest, material greed, and lust for power are the dominating ideals of the day. Patriotism has killed piety and passions have overpowered logic. A new slogan which says ‘Blessed are the strong, for they shall possess the earth’ is bringing about chaotic conditions in the world.

Is there any remedy for the confusion and civilized barbarity engendered by this mania for war? Wars are ostensibly carried on in the name of order, justice, and civilization; yet, we are far from goodwill, love, and peace. How can feelings of sympathy, tolerance, and benevolence prosper in an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, and frustration? ‘War’, as Jawaharlal Nehru has said, ‘is really the negation of truth and humanity’. When there is the deliberate and persistent propagation of hatred and falsehood, we can have little hope of the establishment of a secure and equitable social order.

The world has not as yet recovered from the shocks and handicaps resulting from the last two devastating world wars. The nations of the world want to realize their truth and strength in war; they think they are nourished in war and wasted by peace, taught by war and deceived by peace! This ideology has led the leaders of nations to believe that power is the test of a nation’s greatness, that periodic wars are a biological necessity. Such deviation from the plane of idealism has only tended to intensify the catastrophe rather than bring succour to troubled humanity.



A critical analysis of the world situation reveals the fact that our development has been lop-sided. We have no clear ideas about the supreme ends of life as well as the means leading to their attainment. Even such a stern realist as Sir Stafford Cripps, addressing the Bar Association at San Francisco, in 1948, made a very useful suggestion. He said, 'The world crisis is basically a moral rather than a political or an economic one. . . . Some form of personal religion is essential in maintaining the vitality of the human spirit'. This emphatic declaration brings us face to face with the central questions of the values of life, of philosophy and religion. The changes in the material aspects of the external world, wrought by man, have not inaugurated a corresponding change for the better in the internal life of man. For the creation of a new outlook and attitude which would serve as an antidote for the excessive secularism and wrong conceptions of human life and destiny prevalent today, we need a thorough re-education of man in order to intensify his faith in God and in himself. In more precise terms, we need a vital and comprehensive religion which will ensure the lasting victory of Spirit over matter and enable us to counteract the mechanical and grossly utilitarian theories in the present-day world. If the leaders of nations become illumined with the 'Light from the great heights', then they would cease to act in a way detrimental to human welfare.

Religion teaches us that man is not a mere political or economic being, but that he has far wider horizons, invincible hopes and spiritual aspirations, ever impelling him to sub-

ordinate the temporal to the eternal. Says the *Bhagavad Gita* (V. 22):

*'Ye hi samsparśajā bhogā duḥkhaṇaya  
eva te*

*Ādyantavantah kauteya na teṣu ramate  
budhah'.*

'For, the enjoyments that arise from contact with objects are only sources of pain. They have a beginning and an end, O son of Kunti, and the wise find no delight in them'.

If we are to have an abiding faith in spiritual values and in the brotherhood of man, we shall have to renounce the pursuit of the struggle for self and power and gain an insight into the profound meaning of existence. Without a transformation in man himself, there cannot be any change for the better in life and society. Even an ideal system of economic efficiency and political stability cannot root out selfishness and greed which are ingrained in man. The peace of the world does not depend ultimately upon signed charters and political treaties. The more enduring corporate efforts of individuals and groups can alone bring into being a society of men, strong in the fearless search for God, who is the supreme source of all that is true, good, and beautiful. Religion transforms human nature and gives man an integral vision of life and truth. When we strive to evolve and act upon the sublime synthetic ideal of religion, we may hope to establish a stable world order, in the spirit of the great poet who sang:

*'Serene will be our days and night  
And happy will our nature be;  
When love is an unerring light  
And joy its own security'.*

'One must admit that law, government, politics are phases not final in any way. There is a goal beyond them where law is not needed. Christ saw that the basis is not law, that morality and purity are the only strength. You have the saying that men cannot be made virtuous by an Act of Parliament. And that is why religion is of deeper importance than politics, since it goes to the root, and deals with essentials of conduct. . . . What guarantee have we that this, or any civilization, will last, unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right.'

—Swami Vivekananda



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Hindu seers have always held that no single being is past or beyond redemption. However painful the days of struggle and misfortune, they are invaluable as inevitable stepping-stones to ultimate success. In *The Fallen Angel* the intelligent reader cannot fail to notice this great lesson of life. . . .

*Liberation through Real Renunciation*, reproduced from *The Voice of India*, where it originally appeared under the title 'Signs of a Liberated Soul', represents a portion of a long and illuminating discourse given by Bhishma to Yudhishthira, as related in the Shānti Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. The king Dharmadhvaia, mentioned in the story, is more popularly known as Janaka. It will be concluded in our next. . . .

Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Philosophy, Sri Venkateswara College, Tirupati (Madras State), a renowned scholar, who has to his credit much valuable original research work, discusses the relation between *Freedom and Karma* and ably presents a fresh approach to this problem. . . .

The brief but learned analysis of the profoundly important subject of *The Culture of Emotions in Mystic Life*, with special reference to Hindu and Buddhist thought, is from the pen of Dr. Raj Narain of Lucknow University, with whose thought-provoking writings our readers are already familiar. . . .

*The Study of Philosophy*, by Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., of the Sagar University, is a close and well-reasoned investigation into the realms of human thought and action, leading to the unambiguous conclusion that apart from its generally misunderstood purely speculative character, philosophy has a direct and intimate bearing on every important aspect of life, both individual and national.

### IDEAL FOR MODERN INDIA

Modern India, one may say, has just crossed the threshold of a new era in her illustrious history. Naturally, like any other independent country, she too is faced with several momentous problems, on the solution of which depend the form and content of her future national and cultural regeneration. One of the most crucial of these problems is the role which religion and spirituality, the life-breath of India from time immemorial, are going to play in the coming reconstruction. There is a bewildering conflict of opinion among the leaders on this issue. The passion for achieving a new social transformation is leading many away from the deeper influences of religion. A radical change in the life of the Indian people, it is asserted, will rid our national endeavours of the 'benumbing effects of vague mysticisms' and make the people physically and mentally strong for ably assuming the responsibilities of nation-building. But whither are we to go under the circumstances?

Swami Akhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston and the Vedanta Society of Providence, U.S.A., writing on the 'Ideal for Modern India', in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (February—April 1952) significantly stresses the urgent need for an intelligent revival of our spiritual culture for building up a healthy social order in keeping with the true genius of India. Analysing the problem of tension and its remedies in modern society, the Swami writes: 'India should be very clear in her basic understanding of life and pursuit of happiness. There was a time when modern Indian scholars felt that the only way India could achieve her legitimate status among the nations of the world was to imitate the habits of the English and their attitude towards life. Now, again, many young scholars are attracted to dialectic materialism as a source of inspiration. . . . Above all, the



extent of neurosis and psychosis is frightening many of the social scientists, philosophers, and religious leaders. The remedies that are suggested by liberal thinkers are all patchwork as they do not go to the root of the trouble. So their remedies are symptomatic, hence they are only ameliorating rather than curing or preventing social diseases.

'In the first place, this modern Western attitude towards life, which is hedonistic or pleasure-seeking, will necessarily create inordinate competition and other evils of imperialism. We need not elaborate this point. In the second place, this attitude stimulates desire for personal satisfaction for pleasure and gradually makes man extremely selfish, egocentric, and exclusive. Frustration and mental tension is created. We all know the Indian teaching that the more butter is poured on fire, the more it flares up. Similarly, the more a person tries to satisfy inordinate tendencies, the more will they increase. Consequently, frustration and tension become disturbing companions of the human mind. The neurotic and psychotic cases in Western society are examples of the effect of this kind of attitude towards life. Interpersonal relationships are greatly affected because of the selfish desire for gratification of the primitive urges of man without any control or discipline'.

Multiplication of wants, in the name of civilization, can indeed go on indefinitely. But it brings us no nearer to the solution of the conflicts and tensions that are eating into the very vitals of modern society. The limit to man's craving for enjoyment can be fixed only by a philosophy of life which restrains man from enjoyment. It is restraint that is the source of all spiritual power. Spiritual idealism, instead of being 'ineffectual', will transform men into dynamic personalities, who will be the masters of their minds and be free from bias or corruption in running the social machinery. Says Swami Akhilananda:

'We want to make it very clear that we are not negating the world or life; we are only shifting the emphasis from the sensate to the abiding nature of the world. We admit that this is very simple to say but very difficult to carry out. Conceptual knowledge of this viewpoint does not seem to give the mental power needed for the translation of the ideal into

everyday life. If it were so simple in practice, the people would not have gone through such agony, conflict, and frustration. The Hindus do not stop after they give an intellectual or philosophical understanding of the problem and its remedies. They are pragmatic in this respect and they give us a scheme of life, so that a man of any level of existence can try to change his outlook and his method of living.

'It is however, necessary for India, or any other country, to make the necessary adjustment in her economic, and social system in this modern age. She cannot cling to the ancient methods. Nevertheless, the basic philosophy of life, namely, the attainment of God or manifestation of the Self, should be kept bright. The secondary values, also, will have to be reoriented according to the necessities of the time. In many previous periods India has followed this principle. She will have to do the same now and teach the world how scientific knowledge can be used for constructive and creative purposes, while remaining subordinated to the real pursuit of knowledge or divine realization'.

One has not only to talk religion, but *live it*, practise from moment to moment what one professes: 'There is a passage in one of the Upanishads which says: "Cover the world with God"... If a person tries to see God in everyone, this will cover the whole world with the spirit of God. Thus everything that he does is spiritual work....'

'This is what Swami Vivekananda calls Practical Vedanta. It means the application of the knowledge of God in our everyday life. Hindu philosophy generally emphasizes the oneness of existence. In this scheme of life it is advised that we try to apply that knowledge in every field of activity. It is true, however, that in the beginning we have considerably to apply imagination to feel the presence of God and cultivate that thought; but gradually that very thought becomes actual realization. This is what Sri Krishna and Swami Vivekananda mean when they talk of Karma Yoga or the path of action which leads to God-realization. Karma Yoga means the performance of everyday duties in the spirit of service and worship, without calculation



regarding success and failure. In other words, the practice of detachment and not indifference should be observed'.

The Indian ideal of life has always emphasized a spiritual view that will safely pilot the individual through the surging waters of life's necessities and demands. Referring to the aims and values of life, the Swami observes: 'According to the Hindus, the primary objective of life is the awareness of God or attainment of eternal peace. The secondary objectives are: (1) Proper, healthy satisfaction through sense-objects, or what is called "life and world affirmation"; (2) ethical culture; and (3) proper knowledge and application of means for the cultivation of such satisfactions. The secondary objectives have stages of development. The first one is enjoyment of the world. The second includes ethical principles which must be developed so that the pursuit of pleasure may lead us to the primary objective through harmonious relationships and inner stability. The third objective requires proper equipment and training so that a person can have happiness without creating conflict and confusion in himself or society'.

Spiritual life, therefore, is not a useless pursuit of vague generalities. It confers on the individual indomitable strength of mind and power of free will which can be canalized for the betterment of oneself and society. Years ago, Mahatma Gandhi observed: 'But if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction'. Technological growth, unaccompanied by a corresponding advance in the moral and spiritual stature of the men who are called upon to benefit by such growth, is fraught with grave consequences, as we find today. Religion and spirituality thus become the most potent factors for the creation of a balanced and equitable social order—a social order which will satisfy the need of the people not only for food and clothing, but also for the immeasurably more important spiritual sustenance of the soul. The way lies in doing first

things first by following the example of the great mystics of our country, as of every land. Reiterating this aspect of the Ideal for Modern India, Swami Akhilananda states:

'The great mystics have said and demonstrated that certain disciplines and practices are necessary for religious awakening. There is tremendous value in them. If intellectual knowledge could give us that awakening then all philosophers and theologians would have been saints. If people do not intensify their spiritual practices, and thereby integrate their emotions and develop their will power, anomalies will remain in their lives. Those who have emotional ups and downs do not practise spiritual discipline sufficiently in any way. On the other hand, those who practise meditation, prayer, or devotional exercises will show integration of their emotions and stability in their lives. They will never indulge in deplorable activities. They have full control over themselves, their emotions, passions, and inordinate tendencies.

'As we read in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: "But he who is always of restrained mind and has right understanding, his senses are controllable like the good horses of a charioteer". So we have to cultivate intellectual conception of ethical and spiritual principles and then learn to apply them in life and activities. When we have these threefold secondary objectives of life, then alone can we grasp the primary objective,—knowledge of God. When we understand the value of secondary objectives with the training and discipline for the development of will-power and integration of the emotions, then we can have knowledge of God and abiding peace. Frustration, conflict, and mental disturbance vanish. A man who has that happiness and knows the secret of peace can serve others, not the person who talks about peace. Time and again, men and women of God-realization have given peace to innumerable persons. When we consider the different civilizations, we find that most of the great civilizations were built or reconstructed by men and women of peace and harmony. It is true that sensate civilizations have not been based on the higher religious attitude and the result has been disastrous. They were not only shortlived but they also had the inherent possibility of deterioration and degeneration. As a result, they destroyed themselves and made their people extremely restless and unhappy. On the other hand, the Hindu, Buddhist, and early Christian civilizations,



produced great men and women of peace who shared their experiences with others and, thereby, kept the spirit of the ideal bright in innumerable persons. So, the real durable civilizations and integrated societies were constructed and reconstructed by people who were not selfish and who did not limit their spiritual joy to themselves. Moreover, they were real altruists because they showed the people how to have individual and collective peace'.

'The social problems and so-called religious problems of modern India', concludes Swami Akhilananda, 'can be removed and society can be integrated and harmonized and real brotherhood can be established only by going to the fundamental teachings of the different religions. Today it is up to the real spiritual persons and the true philosophers to show the path to future peace, by practically following it "for the good of many and for the happiness of many"', as Swami Vivekananda declared'.

### SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE HINDUS

'I do not wish to pretend that society can hold together if people murder and steal. What I do say is, that the kind of man whom I should wish to see in the world is one who will have no impulse to murder and steal, who will abstain from murder not because it is prohibited, but because his thoughts and feelings carry him away from impulses of destruction'.

In these words Bertrand Russell has sought to convey the paramount necessity of transforming the individual to ensure a social order free from the tyrannical rule of law and brute force. To the modern social theorist this may seem a remote idealistic proposition, to be only wished for in imagination, but difficult to bring into practical operation. This is but natural. For, we are witnessing today the shift of the emphasis from individual self-perfection to group regimentation, which is sought to be achieved through a blind idolization of the State as an 'end in itself', not very dissimilar to the theocratic view that upheld the divine right of kings in olden days. Such a social philosophy, according to the Hindu view, is defective in so far as it considers man as merely an economic being, his life dominated by one urge only—the urge to sensual enjoyment. This hedonistic outlook would

naturally unleash all the grosser instinctual urges of man, without let or hindrance.

The Hindu sociologists of old, viewing the problem from a broader and deeper understanding of the purposes of life, always strove to turn the vision of the individual inwards, towards an ideal beyond the immediate concerns of *meum and tuum*, which transcended all social ties and looked upon social endeavour as a means to the goal. It was this spiritual basis of social philosophy that furnished the law-givers of ancient India with an immense power that succeeded in eliminating corrupt social practices by carefully and convincingly restraining and regulating man's mad rush for wealth and power, so characteristic of modern life. They sought to provide the individual with ample opportunities for self-perfection even while performing his arduous social duties. Admirably delineating this Hindu view of social ethics, Sri P. N. Srinivasachari, the renowned philosopher and author, in an illuminating article in the *Vedanta Kesari* (for June 1952), observes:

'This goal of Hindu social ethics is summed up in the trinity of Sat, Satya, and Sattva by the integration of philosophy, ethics, and religion respectively. Sat is Brahman or the whole of Reality; Satya is the truth that the world or Jagat is Brahman-maya, pervaded by Brahman, and every Karma and Dharma in thought, word, and deed connotes Reality. Sattva is goodness ending in godliness. Conduct is not only good in itself as duty, but is also the Good that is desired as the supreme end of life or social happiness. Duty and happiness are fulfilled in God as He alone is good and then goodness and godliness are one. Judged from this standpoint Sattva is social goodness or the happiness of humanity and other Jivas as a whole and it is the only means to godliness. Then Sat, Satya, and Sattva are one and God Himself is the endeavour and the end. Hindu social ethics thus destroys the barrier of philosophy, ethics, and religion; and then spirituality and service are one. The dualism between egoism and altruism, individualism and collectivism disappears when Ahamkāra, the root evil of life, is rooted out and Aham is merged in Brahman, its true Aham. Each works for all and all work for each when work is elevated into worship. The social instinct in man is really the instinct for the infinite or the all-self and when it is realized service is fulfilled in spirituality. The spiritual man freed from selfishness or Ahamkara



longs to pour out his divine love in service to humanity. Hindu social ethics is exemplified in modern times in the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Ramakrishna, and they have universalized its scope and value. And the Mahatma has applied it to politics and economics and shown by his life and teachings how Ahimsā or love can combat hatred and sterilize or transform it into love and how he has wrought a miracle in the peaceful transference of government from England to India. Swami Vivekananda unified philosophy in Vedanta and made it roar in the Parliament of Religions in America and influenced the West to look to India for spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of universal religion and firmly laid the foundation of a fraternity of faiths based on higher Hinduism. All nations today look to India for the abandonment of a possible world war, and the advent of peace. This can only be done by the practice of her age-long ideals of spirituality and universal service and thus turning the attention of the world from the bomb to Brahman and Brahmanization'.

It is often heard being said that the Indian stress on spirituality is the outcome of a philosophy of 'pessimism, fatalism, and acosmism'. But the Vedantic ideal is neither optimism nor pessimism, and it lends no more weight to the view that life is all evil and sorrow than it does to the hedonistic pleasure-principle. The Hindu is a practical idealist. He does not picture life in the world as a bed of roses or unalloyed bliss, but rightly recognizes it in its true colours as what it indeed is. Based on this, he builds up his social edifice, determined to derive the maximum happiness and peace out of the perplexing contradictions in life.

'It is mischievous', writes Sri Srinivasachari, 'to say that the Hindu ethics treats the dog and God alike as its toleration is based upon intellectual appraisal and cultural and spiritual appreciation and not on moral indifference. In Hindu social ethics, there is no contradiction between the facts of psychology, the imperatives of ethics, the metaphysics of the self, the religion of the all-self, and the spiritual sociology of the equality of all Jivas owing to divine immanence in them. These studies are interrelated and related to the whole theme and

there is no barrier between individualism and collectivism as they all insist on the solidarity of Jivaloka or society and the unity of the world outlook. This comprehensive ideal of welfare is well portrayed in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Gita* and, though the ideal has been the same through the ages, the extent of its application is today enlarged and is all-inclusive as illustrated by the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission whose motto is spirituality and service. Hindu psychology provides the data for the synthetic outlook'.

The Sanatana Dharma, the result of centuries of social experimentation, was the crystallization of Hindu social ethics. It easily recognized the obvious fact that all men are not born equal and so insisted on the performance of individual duties according to each man's inherent psychological aptitudes and moral habitudes. The goal of Hindu social endeavour has ever been regarded, as rightly observed by Sri Srinivasachari, 'as an administrative system based on the spiritualization of the political power and the democratic welfare of all the subjects'.

'Hindu sociology recognizes moral distinctions due to differences in temperament or endowment, environment, and education, but it denies exclusiveness. The Western study of instincts and emotions is very valuable to the Hindu in the formation of character in the individual and social aspect as it confirms his theory of moral training, as a case of sublimation and spiritualization. The instincts like anger, lust, and egoism cannot be destroyed but they can be disciplined by giving them a spiritual direction. Animality can be transfigured into humanity and spirituality in the growth of moral life'.

The tremendous social upheavals that we are witnessing in every part of the world are followed by inevitable repercussions in our country too. At this critical juncture it is essential that our sociologists and reformers should have a clear and lofty ideal of social reconstruction. Whither shall we turn for inspiration and guidance if not to our own genuinely earnest master minds, ancient and modern?



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MAHATMA (LIFE OF M. K. GANDHI) (VOL. IV).  
By D. G. TENDULKAR. *Distributors: Publications Department, The Times of India Press, Fort Bombay 1. Pages 418. Price Rs. 25.*

This volume—the fourth of the series of eight volumes covering the Life of Mahatma Gandhi—is mainly devoted to a depiction of the great task of 'silent constructive revolution' to which Gandhiji addressed himself ceaselessly during the years 1934-38. Very early in his political career, in South Africa as well as in India, Gandhiji had realized the supreme importance of enlisting the support and active participation of the teeming rural population in order to make the struggle for independence truly representative of the masses. For full four years, therefore, Gandhiji concentrated his attention and energies on village reconstruction work and various other constructive activities. It was no programme dictated solely by policy; for, Gandhiji always held that politics should be not a means of exploitation for gaining power but a genuine instrument of service for the all-round uplift of the masses along lines best suited to the national genius. The only effective way for achieving this, his unerring vision discerned, was to work for the economic rehabilitation of the humble peasant and the poor labourer who work hard for the greater part of the day, but often get no adequate return.

Gandhiji withdrew temporarily from active participation in the political movement of the Congress (as narrated at the end of the preceding volume) and applied himself to the one task of organizing and guiding the village reconstruction work. He also gave the Congress, in a definite outline, the triple programme of the revival of the spinning wheel, the removal of untouchability, and Hindu-Muslim unity, and made this combined programme the spearhead of his new movement touching the very heart of India. 'Back to the village' was the motto which guided Gandhiji in his revolutionary role. This constructive programme, though seeming to bear no direct relation to the main objective of political independence, proved in the long run to be a powerful force that contributed amply to the achievement of that objective. By rousing the dormant self-consciousness of the Indian masses, Gandhiji inspired the downtrodden millions to lift their heads and assert their legitimate rights.

The All-India Village Industries Association, one of the main instruments of Gandhiji's constructive programme, was ushered into existence in December 1934, at Wardha. This Association, though part of the Congress, was intentionally allowed to exist and

shaping of this Association may be considered one of the outstanding achievements of Gandhiji during this period of his life as a constructive social worker.

Side by side with the growth and expansion of the village reconstruction movement, the Indian political scene gave evidence of new complications. The widening gulf between Hindus and Muslims in India, engineered by interested persons, the Harijan problem, the assumption of office by the Congress in 1937, after sweeping the polls in the general elections of the same year, were some of the events and developments of the period described in the book with brevity and lucidity. Much credit is due to the learned author for giving the readers copious and aptly culled excerpts from Gandhiji's writings on a vast variety of topics and numerous problems. There is ample valuable material of ethical and cultural significance in the discussions between Gandhiji and Mrs. M. Sanger, leader of the birth-control movement, the members of the American Negro delegation, Dr. J. Mott, an evangelist, some members of the Y.M.C.A., and some distinguished Christian leaders.

The Faizpur session of the Congress in 1936, under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, is vividly depicted, focussing attention on the dominant role played by Gandhiji. Continuing further, the biography graphically describes Gandhiji's tour of Travancore, during 1937, for the popularization of Khadi and the uplift of the Harijans, Gandhiji's plans for reorganizing national education and making it self-supporting through his basic education scheme, the Haripura session of the Congress in 1938, with Subhas Chandra Bose as President, Gandhiji's momentous and long-cherished tour of the North-West Frontier Province, which he visited twice during 1938,—at the instance of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the organizer and leader of the Khudai Khidmatgars. Gandhiji's indefatigable and earnest efforts in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and his meeting with M. A. Jinnah are briefly described in their chronological context.

Throughout this period of hectic political work and constructive activity Gandhiji never lost sight of the fundamental philosophy of life and the high spiritual idealism which were to him his very life-breath so to say. The lofty ideals of renunciation, services, and *ahimsā*, which constituted the core of his social philosophy, called for explanation and justification in the context of contemporary events. In making himself clearly understood, Gandhiji was supremely successful. Only a hero in action and a real Karma Yogi like him could adopt these prin-



ciples as a guide to personal endeavour, and also convince the masses as well as the classes of the soundness of these principles so that he could carry the whole nation with him in his historic movement. Thus his writings in the *Harijan* and elsewhere and his innumerable speeches—relating to prohibition, basic education, duties and rights, the old order and the new, sanitation, medicine, and art and literature for the masses etc.—became the guiding principles to all who wanted to think and act along the new philosophy of life. The contents of this volume bear eloquent testimony to this fact. The publishers have maintained the high standard of book production for which they are well-known. Like the three preceding volumes the present one also carries a rich array of rare and interesting photographs from real life and letters and documents in facsimile.

The remaining four volumes, which are expected to follow one another at short intervals before long, will depict the Gandhian era with its different phases leading to India's freedom.

**VEDANTA FOR MODERN MAN.** *Published by Harper and Brothers, 49 East 33rd Street, New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 425. Price \$5.00.*

This intellectually sumptuous volume, also edited and carrying an Introduction by Christopher Isherwood, is a worthy successor to the earlier *Vedanta for the Western World* published some years ago (1945). Like the previous anthology this one too consists of articles, by well-known writers—Indian, American, and European,—originally published in the bimonthly magazine *Vedanta and the West* conducted by the Vedanta Society of Southern California, U.S.A. The earlier selection included articles from the beginning of the magazine in January 1938 up to the end of the year 1944, while the present selection is taken from the issues of the magazine from the beginning of 1945 up to the end of the year 1950. While both volumes are concerned with Vedanta and its presentation to the Western world, the first volume bears evidence that the earlier articles were of a more pioneering spirit, and were gradually feeling their way towards that maturity which is much more in evidence in the present volume. We can now, with some assurance, say that Vedanta in the West has come of age. It now stands in its own right, with its own body of expounders, and with its own roots flourishing and expanding in its own soil.

The range of contributors in this volume is also wider. There is not the same heavy reliance on the three brilliant pens of Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, and the learned editor Christopher Isherwood, though their contributions naturally are still among the most important. Separate

phases of the philosophy and technique of Vedanta—including essays on related subjects such as art, religion, religious literature, and personalities—are treated by distinguished men and women—litterateurs, spiritual aspirants, genuine devotees, and learned Indian monks—who know by experience what they are talking about. Twenty-six contributions out of a total of sixty-three are by members of the Ramakrishna Order. We have also articles by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of the Indian Union, and Rabindranath Tagore. These will be particularly acceptable to the Western reader, who does not enjoy the same opportunities as we in India do of listening to the words of India's noble sons on India's greatest message to the world.

The contents of the various articles do not all bear very directly on the central topic of Vedanta. But Gerald Heard is always stimulating, even when he is writing on 'Is Old Age Worth While?', and Aldous Huxley writes with as much distinction as ever in breaking new ground in his 'Notes on Zen'. The short poems by Frederick Manchester and Anne Hamilton are sweet in tone and content, though they lay no claim to be considered great poetry. John van Druten's account of his mystical experience in a drug store in the Beverley Hills is written with sincerity.

The two outstanding contributions, in content though not in form, are an article by Swami Siddheswarananda on 'A Hindu View of Christian Theology', and Sister Christine's 'Memories of Swami Vivekananda'. Both are much longer than the average, and both contain important original matter. The Swami's article is wider than its title; it deals as much with the Christian reactions to Hindu theology, and is written with an insight and tact which few writers on comparative theology seem able to manage. It should enable theologians, both in Christendom and in India, to continue the useful process of re-thinking their basic concepts in terms of the other's theology.

The Memories of Sister Christine are altogether delightful and charming. There are two unforgettable pictures of Swami Vivekananda. The one is of the life at Thousand Island Park, with community housekeeping proving rather a strain, relieved by his characteristic offer to cook for them himself, in his own royal manner, after which every dish in the house would require washing. The other is of his return to the Vedanta Society's house in the poorer area of New York, followed by his usual 'ragged retinue' of unfortunates picked up during his walk, and his quick reply to implied criticism, 'You see, these are Shiva's demons'. There have been very many 'Shiva's demons' since those days.



There is not space in this short review to deal with Gerald Heard's outstanding article on Western Vedanta coming of age with which the volume opens, nor with Aldous Huxley's contribution explaining the Vedantist elements in the Lord's Prayer. The reader must turn to the volume itself. As the Editor says in his preface, it is unlikely that many people will read this book straight through, but there are many evenings of fruitful reading for those who have it beside them, and it is good that these articles have been lifted from the ephemeral life and limited circulation of a magazine to the quasi-permanent status of this handsome volume.

The publishers, Harper and Brothers, are a guarantee of good printing and book production, and this volume is a distinct improvement on its predecessor. The type of this volume is simpler and clearer, and the arrangement on the page is neater. There are short notes introducing the Contributors. An account of the Ramakrishna Order and its activities is in its proper place at the end of the volume. But an index is still lacking, and there is still visible some indecision over the transliteration of Sanskrit terms. A plea may be put in also for a few necessary diacritical marks in books of this sort, even at the risk of disturbing the average reader. To distinguish the long and short 'a', at least, might be a help rather than a hindrance to easy reading. But these are minor points in this grand volume of over 400 pages, which richly deserves as large a circulation in India as in its native America. Every thoughtful reader in India would love to possess a copy of the book

and would ardently wish it would become possible to obtain a selection of articles from this and the earlier volume at a price more within the compass of his moderate means.

A. H.

### BENGALI

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. BY TAMASARANJAN Roy. *Published by General Printers and Publishers Ltd., 119 Dharmatalla Street, Calcutta. Pages 153. Price Rs. 1-8.*

This is an admirable work by a young writer who is the Headmaster of a Government High School in West Bengal. It shows that he has a thorough acquaintance with the vast field of what can be called the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. The book is divided into five chapters, and constitutes a lucid biographical survey of the eventful life of the great patriot saint of India, Swami Vivekananda. The first chapter covers the Swami's boyhood, meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, and his itinerant life; the second, his memorable activities in Europe and America; the third, his return to the motherland and triumphant tour from Colombo to Almora; the fourth, the Swami's second visit to the West; and the concluding chapter describes the Swami's last days.

The life and message of the great Swami is treated here in a way at once novel and appealing. The principal events of the Swami's life and his foremost teachings are presented to the Bengali-reading public, especially for the benefit of juvenile readers, in a most interesting and fascinating manner.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA KUTIR, ALMORA

This Ashrama, popularly known as 'Ramakrishna Kutir', a Branch Centre of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, came into existence in the year 1918 through the efforts of Swami Turiyananda and Swami Shivananda—both direct-disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. It is situated on the outskirts of the town of Almora in Uttar Pradesh and has been serving as a silent and sublime retreat for the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, who come and stay here for long or short periods during their leave from active work and devote themselves to meditation and study. Being in a secluded and charming spot on the heights of the Himalayas and amidst beautiful surroundings, free from the din and bustle of the town, it possesses a salubrious climate, as well as a spiritual atmosphere, proving as such an ideal place for change and rest.

It is also situated on the road to the famous places of pilgrimage in the interior of the Himalayas, such as Kailas, Manas-sarovar, Kedarnath, and Badrinarayan, and therefore serves as a convenient halting-place for pilgrims—lay and monastic—on their way to and from these places of pilgrimage. And the Ashrama is called upon to provide these pilgrims from far and near not only with facilities for a few days' stay but also often with some help—pecuniary, medical, or other. As more and more monks, devotees, and friends are being drawn every year to this Ashrama, its usefulness and importance need hardly be over emphasized.

Some of the other activities of the Ashrama are: Vedanta study-classes for monastic inmates; maintenance of a library for the use of the inmates and the public; observance of important religious festivals and birthdays of saints; and arranging



occasional lectures and discourses, in the Ashrama and outside, by monastic members of the Order who come and stay at the Ashrama from other centres.

The financial position of the Ashrama is none too satisfactory. While the demand on its services is increasing, its income is dwindling. The local hill-people being too poor to contribute any substantial funds, the Ashrama has to depend mainly on contributions from outside. The cost of maintenance of one monastic member is about Rs. 360 per annum. Besides the necessity for funds for meeting the recurring expenses on maintenance of the inmates, the Ashrama is in need of financial help for its following requirements: (1) For the extension of the existing dining-hall and kitchen—Rs. 3,000; (2) for Sadhu-seva Fund—Rs. 5,000; (3) for the repair and maintenance of buildings—Rs. 1,000; (4) for library and publication department—Rs. 2,000; (5) for a cow-shed and some cows—Rs. 5,000; (6) for a cement rain-water reservoir, with shed, for bathing and gardening—Rs. 5,000; (7) for the purchase of a building to be used as a guest-house—Rs. 10,000.

Contributions, general or ear-marked, for any of the above-mentioned purposes, will be accepted and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, U.P.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

#### BRIEF REPORT FOR 1951

The following is a brief report of the work done by the Mission during the year 1951:

**Centres:** There were altogether 67 Mission centres, which served all without any distinction and preached non-sectarian religious principles.

**Relief Work:** In connection with the East Pakistan Refugee Relief, more attention was paid to the rehabilitation of the homeless victims. In 1951 the Mission settled 1,462 families in various parts of Assam, Tripura, and West Bengal, in addition to supervising rehabilitation work in the tea gardens near Silchar. Up to the end of the year the Mission spent Rs. 74,817-0-6 for this Relief Work. The Bihar Famine Relief was started in September 1951, where about 103½ tons of wheat was distributed to the inhabitants of 46 villages in the Darbhanga and Purnea Districts.

**Medical Service:** The Mission conducted 8 Hospitals with a total of 636 beds, which treated 13,887 cases in all. The 43 Outdoor Dispensaries treated altogether 19,07,905 cases, including repeated ones, during the year. The Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Dungri, near Ranchi, was opened in January 1951, and treated 57 patients in its 40 beds.

**Help to the Poor:** Under this head, some branch centres distributed 49 maunds of rice and Rs. 1,041-4-0 in cash, besides a quantity of powdered milk, cloth, etc. The Headquarters helped 94 students and 52 families with Rs. 14,524-9-8. Regular stipends totalling Rs. 2,843-15-0 were also given to 28 refugee students from Sind, while 4 schools received Rs. 247-10-0.

**Educational Work:** Work under this head included 3 Colleges, of which 1 was for Teachers' Training. Through the High Schools the Mission taught about 7,280 boys and 2,537 girls. The Lower grade Schools had on their rolls 10,902 boys and 3,259 girls. The Industrial and Technical Schools had 279 boys and 43 girls, and the Students' Homes 1,946 boys and 163 girls.

**Work outside India:** In Ceylon, Burma, Singapore and Mauritius the Mission successfully carried on its educational and cultural activities. Only in Pakistan it somehow maintained its existence.

**Finance:** The total income for the year was Rs. 35,69,239-1-10 and the total expenditure Rs. 30,23,475-2-7.

Belur Math  
21-10-52

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA  
General Secretary  
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK

#### RAYALASEEMA & 24-PARGANAS

##### 1. Rayalaseema Famine Relief:

Between the 23rd of August and the 23rd of September 1952, the Mission distributed Rs. 82,748-7-3 worth of grains and Rs. 1,727-14-0 worth of clothing in the four districts of Rayalaseema. Besides, 10,000 yards of Dhotis and Saris, received as contribution from Bombay, were distributed. Rs. 1,075/- was spent on well-works, and Rs. 2,821-7-9 was given as educational help. The Government of Madras has kindly donated a further sum of Rs. 50,000/- for the work.

##### 2. 24-Parganas Famine Relief:

Started on 17-6-1952 the relief work covers over 9 unions and the Taki Municipal area in the Sunderbans, and a population of about 1,44,920. Up to 7th October (including repeated numbers) the number of families helped was 1,22,303, the number of adults being 1,37,746, and the number of children 1,85,352. The total quantity of rice and atta distributed amounted to 4,794 mds. 1 sr. 4 chs. and 4,752 mds. 16 srs. 8 chs. respectively.

Any contribution for the relief work may kindly be sent to The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math (Howrah).



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठ जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

BY CECILLE POMERENE

Oft have I lain in the silence of night—  
Alone, bewildered, forlorn.  
O Mother, how can you treat your child thus?  
This separation is nnbearable.

Were I a bit of thread, I could be woven into your garment  
And stay close to you.  
Were I a piece of leather, I could be made into sandals  
To protect your beloved feet.  
Were I a mango, you could eat me quickly—what joy!  
But alas! I am not one of these.

You graciously permit the sun to tint your velvet cheek.  
You laughingly allow the wind to ruffle up your hair.  
You let the gentle rain softly pat your hand in greeting.  
But alas! I am not one of these.

The evil winds blow strong and I am frail.  
The darkness closes in and I am terrified.  
Lonely and confused I stumble on the way.  
My cries pierce the night—but only stillness replies.  
Tell me, Mother, is a bit of thread really dearer to your heart  
than this child?

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# LIBERATION THROUGH REAL RENUNCIATION

*(Continued from the November issue)*

Sulabhā, unaffected by the caustic quality of the king's rebuke, replied with great calm and dignity. Her words befitted her queenly appearance and the order of mendicants to which she belonged.

'O king,' she said, 'your speech is ambiguous and unconvincing. You have established no premiss, come to no conclusion. Filled with pride in what you feel to be your invincible power, you let antagonism for me rule your discourse, and therefore it was filled with faults and contradictions and disclosed the emptiness of your understanding. Having heard it, I cannot but remember that those who are truly emancipated claim no merit.

'You say that renunciation resulting from knowledge is the way of liberation, yet you have all the forms of attachment that are usual to royalty. Freedom of the soul, O king, represents great peace and calmness of being. It is a state obtained only through intense struggle and should claim your entire attention, which is now divided among the thousand details of ruling a kingdom. To be emancipated while exercising sovereignty is not possible, for to continue to rule as you do means the relegation of spiritual struggles to the background of life. Is the peace of real liberation yours, when you fear that I represent a hostile king? Because of such fears and constant worries and conflicts regarding possessions, you are disquieted and tense. You represent a sorry state of attainment. From the empty condition of your mind, I am aware that you possess emancipation in theory only; you have yet to attain it in actuality.

'Because it is proper to answer you, I shall, O king, discuss true liberation. My words will be true, logical, without repetition. My discourse will not be prompted by desire, wrath, fear or any sense of shame, pride or pity. Though I shall take great care in my

choice of words, I shall at the same time be careful that they express my meaning, for if essential truth is disregarded even words that are excellent in sound and sense convey erroneous impressions.

'Listen with concentrated attention while I answer your queries regarding who I am, to whom I belong, and where I shall go upon finishing my business here. To reply intelligently I must first remind you of the fundamentals of what is called individual existence. The components of all existences are alike. Moreover, the same Supreme Consciousness pervades all these components.

'O king, thirty principles account for all existences. I shall now enumerate these principles. The bodily senses must, of course, be mentioned first. No one asks the senses what they are. Likewise, no particular sense has any knowledge of itself or of the others. The eye cannot see itself, the ear cannot hear itself, nor can the eye or ear discharge the functions of any of the other senses, for each sense functions only in its own field. Even functioning in combination, the senses do not know one another. In order to discharge its duty each sense must come in contact with objects external to itself. The eye, form, and light constitute the requirements for what is called seeing. The operation of each of the other senses has likewise its requirements.

'Between the functions of the senses, such as seeing, hearing, and so on, and the ideas that are their result, namely form, sound, and so on, there is an entity called the mind, which has a function of its own. With the help of the mind one distinguishes the existent from the non-existent in order to arrive at certainty about all ideas derived from the senses. With the five senses of knowledge and the five senses of action, the mind makes a total of eleven principles.



'The twelfth principle is understanding, by which, when doubt arises in respect to what is to be known, correct apprehension is gained. After it, comes the thirteenth principle, *sattva*, the quality of purity. Following *sattva* is self-consciousness, the fourteenth principle, through which one distinguishes the self from the not-self. Desire is the fifteenth principle; on it the whole universe rests. As long as desire exists, rebirth takes place. After desire comes the sixteenth principle, *avidyā* (ignorance), in which inhere the seventeenth and eighteenth principles, *māyā* (illusion) and *prakāśa* (manifestation), followed by the nineteenth, constituting the pairs of opposites: happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, and the like. Beyond the nineteenth principle is time, the twentieth, to the action of which the births and deaths of all beings are due. These twenty principles exist together.

'In addition, O king, there are five great primal elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—that with existence and non-existence bring the number of principles to twenty-seven. Then, to complete the total of thirty, there are *vidhi* (righteousness and its reverse, making up the seed of desire), *śukra* (which aids the seed of desire to grow), and *bala* (the exertion made to gratify desire).

'What is the source of the thirty principles? Some philosophers whose vision is limited declare the manifest (that is, atoms) to be their source. But those who are conversant with spiritual science say that Nature in its unmanifest state is the source of the thirty principles and therefore the fountain-head of all creation; for it is when unmanifest Nature becomes manifest that all creatures are brought forth. O monarch, myself, yourself, and all others who are clothed with a body have our source in unmanifest Nature, as far as our bodies are concerned.

'The form seen at birth has undergone many changes since the time of conception. It continues to change, gradually giving place to other forms. In turn, infancy, childhood, and youth are experienced, and following youth, maturity. Then, after successive

stages, comes old age. With each advance from one stage to another, the body presents an aspect different from the previous one. Moreover, at every moment the constituents of the body undergo change. This state of flux, occasioned by the birth of particles and their death, is imperceptible, even as the changes in the flame of a burning lamp are imperceptible.

'Since this is the state of the bodies of all creatures, since that which is called the body is changing incessantly even as the waters of a river, it is of no consequence whatever to know where any certain body came from, whose it is, or what it does. Can a connection be said to exist between souls and bodies? Creatures are generated from the combination of the thirty principles already named, in the same way that fire is produced when two sticks are rubbed together. Just as you look upon your own body as yours, so you should look upon other bodies as yours, for all bodies are essentially the same. To regard them as different indicates lack of vision.

'If you had truly realized the identity of yourself with others, you would not have needed to interrogate me. For to be free from the idea of duality, from that condition in which one says, "This is mine" and "This is not mine", means that such questions as you have asked are unnecessary. O king, you have given no sign of emancipation; your acts are like those of all others who dwell in the relative state. Can a ruler who in every way behaves as others do possess any indications of emancipation? Can one be emancipated who is concerned with so many distinctions? To the free, all things and all beings are perceived as one. You are unworthy of liberation, O monarch. Your counsellors should strip you of pretence to high attainment. You are full of faults and empty professions, and are bound with many and diverse attachments. The only permissible attachment is that for one's own soul, the shrine of the supreme Divinity.

'Further, hear my answer to your accusation that I have been guilty of unseemly con-



duct, that I have brought about an admixture of castes. How can I be said to have any contact with the body of another, when I have no real contact with my own body? Have you really assimilated the religion of Panchashikha, with all its methods, practices, and ideals? If you have cast off every bond and freed yourself truly from every attachment, why, may I ask, do you cling so unduly to royal prerogatives? I think you have heard the scriptures without benefit, or perhaps you have listened to treatises that only purported to be scriptures.

'It is plain that you are possessed only of mundane knowledge, that you are entangled in the illusions of the world, a slave to all that the world holds dear: the objects of the senses. Though you have no doubt cultivated a distaste for domestic living, emancipation, which is so difficult to attain, lies far beyond you. Remaining between bondage and emancipation, you pretend to have reached the goal. The contact between two free souls has no relation to the physical plane. If the truly emancipated state were yours, you would realize that no harm is done when, with my intellect, I enter your mind. What harm is done to whom?

'It is customary with mendicants to feel free to go into uninhabited places. As your mind is empty of real knowledge, should I hesitate to enter it? I have not touched you in any way. I am within you as a drop of water on a lotus leaf. Such a drop remains on the leaf without penetrating it; in the same way I am not touching you at all. If, in spite of this, you still think you feel my touch, how can it be possible that through the instructions of Panchashikha your knowledge has become dissociated from sense-objects?

'Truly speaking, even my understanding is not in you. Let us say that a hand holds a pot, the pot contains milk, and the milk, a gnat. Though the hand and the pot, the pot and the milk, the milk and the gnat, exist together, they are distinct from one

another. The hand does not partake of the nature of the pot, the pot does not partake of the nature of the milk, the milk does not partake of the nature of the gnat. The condition of each is dependent on itself and can never be altered simply because the other coexists with it temporarily. Similarly, no condition really attaches to him who is emancipated; the free soul is unaffected by passing relationships.

'I have pointed out your shortcomings in regard to spiritual attainment. Aside from these, O king, I am not superior to you. My lineage is the same as yours. I was born of a pure race, the daughter of the royal sage Pradhāna, of whom you have heard. My name is Sulabha. In the sacrifices performed by my ancestors, the foremost of the gods used to be present. Since I was born of such a race, no suitable husband could be found for me. Accordingly, I was instructed in the religion of emancipation, and I wander alone over the face of the earth. There is no hypocrisy in my life of renunciation; I observe all the disciplines of asceticism, and in keeping my vows I am firm and steady, nor do I confuse practices belonging to other orders with those of my own. No words of mine are said without reflection.

'I came to this court after long deliberation. So much had I heard of you, of your purity, and your state of liberation, that I desired to benefit from your great wisdom, without thought or wish to humiliate you or glorify myself. Whatever I have said has been sincere, for the free do not speak from any ulterior motive. Truly free is he who devotes himself to God alone, that sole source of tranquillity. Such a one practises complete renunciation'.

Listening to Sulabha, King Dharmadhvaja at last understood that true liberation is impossible so long as one continues in worldly modes of life. His reason accepted all her arguments as unanswerable. Therefore, when she finished speaking, he remained silent.

(Concluded)



# THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

BY THE EDITOR

'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

'That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: . . .

'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'.

—*St. Matthew*

Man is essentially a social being. No individual can live apart from or work independently of his immediate environment. Society is the sphere of action in which man lives, moves, and strives to realize his ethical and spiritual perfection. The nature and destiny of man is closely allied to the requirements that condition his physical, social, and psychological *milieu*. Men, whether in small groups or big, are ever interdependent and the nexus of human relations—in other words, the brotherhood of man—forms a very vital factor in the stabilization of the foundations whereon stands civilization. Contrariwise, the vast universe around us is intimately bound up with the fate of man and its mysteries have a bearing on the significance of the activities, forces, and influences that incessantly affect him for good or for ill. The understanding of the problem of life itself—a fundamental problem which every man has got to solve for himself some time somehow—unmistakably points to the existence of a directive or purposive agency in the universe. Having transcended the flesh and sublimated the passions and emotions, one discovers that the essence of the brotherhood of man derives its real force directly from the manifestation of the glories of the Kingdom of God.

The desire for peace and plenty, based on mutual understanding and co-operation between individual and individual as well as nation and nation, is universally to be met with. Men have always prayed to God for their daily bread and all other material kinds of prosperity. The achievement of the good and complete life, with or without God, has

been the goal of all ethical and social striving. In this respect, no prominent variation or basic cleavage is seen to exist between communities of people—rich or poor, ancient or modern. For, essentially, human nature exhibits same or similar characteristics in any part of the world. The surface differences and dissimilarities are all there and will be there without doubt. Yet, man believes in and seeks the unity underlying these superficial diversities incidental to relative existence within the limitations of space, time, and causation. Developments in the twentieth-century laboratory are arriving, through a detailed step-by-step process, at the tremendous fact of the unity of existence and confirm the validity of the Vedantic idea that there is one universal Consciousness—the 'non-material' content of *sac-cid-ānanda*—which forms the basis of our entire universe. The urge that impels man to love his neighbour as himself (as his own self) stems from this fact of oneness of humanity. Men are brothers and feel from the heart that they are really so in so far as they are the manifestations of the Divine, all children of Immortality and common heirs to the Kingdom of God. The Upanishads picture the Divine as 'willing to become' the Many: 'I shall become Many, I shall manifest myself in many forms'; 'He himself became the visible and the invisible universe'; 'As small sparks come forth from fire, thus do all bodies, all worlds, and all beings come forth from the One'.

Most people, who are naturally eager to live the good life in accordance with their own temperaments and aptitudes, spontaneously



and sincerely turn to the great teachers of creative spirituality, choosing the particular methods, ways, and techniques that suit them most. But these people, the majority of whom may be found to be devoutly religious at heart, are not a little perplexed at the statement of modern materialists that a good and perfect life, leading to the great brotherhood of man, is, nay, should be, possible without any relation to God or the ultimate principle of the Divinity. The modern man, in search of world understanding and world government, is frantically busy applying his mind to the investigation of ideological schemes and patterns with a view to discovering the most effective agency of altruism for the reconstruction and unification of humanity. The investigations have covered family, education, industry, politics, art, and religion, yielding results and leading to conclusions that have doubtless revolutionized individual as well as institutional relations. But the objective is far from being achieved. Even the most ardent and sincere votary of peace is aghast at the incompatibility of minds, howsoever culturally enlightened, and at the recklessness with which men are enslaved and exploited by fellow men. While the desire to be good and to do good is not lacking in general, the incentive to positive goodness is either absent or too feeble to resist the overwhelming forces of aggressive evil.

The brotherhood of man needs foundations that are stable and enduring, and the incontrovertible evidence furnished by history testifies to the fact that such lasting foundations have been seen to exist in the essential spiritual values that transcend the barriers of race, creed, or colour. Apart from food and shelter, from reasonable comforts and material advantages, men do need the active aspects of ultimate ends that give them a firmer basis of moral obligation than mere humanistic altruism. Utility-hunting and pleasure-seeking motives may take a man far in his search for happiness for himself, but not far enough to make him feel happy by seeking the happiness of his fellow men. To strive to live a

good life without God certainly appears modern. It is more easily said than done. Spirituality has never appeared as popular as materialism, and perhaps could never do so, owing to the difficulties and problems inherent in spirituality itself. It is not that men do not want to be spiritual. The hunger of the soul is more insistently immediate than any other hunger. But because it is so difficult to be spiritual, men easily succumb to the fascination of substitutes for spirituality.

It is common experience that the religion of merely visiting the temple or church is different from the religion of God-consciousness, and that the latter is more difficult. It is not anything extraordinary to see people going to the church or temple and take active part in the prayers and ceremonies held there in order to invoke divine blessings for a better life in the world. What is difficult is to carry from there the valuable treasure of the essentials of a good life and to exemplify them in daily behaviour. The importance of the relation between our daily life and the Kingdom of God lies here, in the imperative need to ensure the efficacy of the prescription for spiritualizing human life and human society. It is good advice to go out and tell people, young and old, to be nice to one another and be virtuous to the maximum possible extent. But never a word is implied even as to why any one should be nice or virtuous much beyond the minimum necessary to gain personal advantages. Mere good intentions to prepare the way for human unity and understanding through political, economic, or geographical bonds fail, as they have often failed in the past, because they are swept away by the gale of aggressive ideological movements and violent unregenerate passions. That which separates man from man increases or decreases in direct proportion to that which separates man from God.

The impact of science on society today is astoundingly forceful. Our civilization is termed a 'scientific' civilization and men are busy controlling the forces of external Nature. Nowadays one can boast of the various uses



to which science has been put and of the many fast-moving and quick-communicating devices that have incredibly reduced the difficulties due to time and distance. These devices have linked up the peoples of the world from one end to the other, giving mankind the benefit of closer and quicker interrelation. Men do not find themselves so few or far between as in ancient times. At the same time the perils and problems of suffering humanity have increased a hundredfold. Of all creatures on earth, man has suffered most, seized by nightmarish complexes, fears, and tensions. Science, by emphasizing reason and belittling intuition and revelation, has, while uniting hands and heads, failed to unite hearts. Mutual mistrust and growing racial and ideological prejudices are the chief causes of discord within the human family. Relics of barbarism are not wanting in the so-called civilized communities, though few would be willing to admit this fact. So long as such a state of things exists or is encouraged to continue to exist, no form of government, however well intentioned, would be able to knit diverse elements together.

God is inextricably bound up with man's personality. The *Gita* declares, 'In whatever way men worship me, in that very way do I fulfil their desires. It is my path, O Arjuna, that men travel in diverse ways'. By loving God we love ourselves as well as all others who are one with us in and through Him,—for, the Kingdom of God is within us. Jesus Christ clearly tells us, 'Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you'. To an expectant but ignorantly cruel world he says, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation'. Engrossed in worldly objects and dedicating themselves to transitory values, people are often seen to take pride in not at all trying to approach God. There are many who not infrequently think that it is possible to use God as a ready and generous supplier of their earthly wants as well as their pleasures hereafter. To such as these, the following words of Jesus are unambiguously pertinent: 'If

any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' To work for the common and highest good of mankind, individuals and groups cannot do better than be inspired by and follow these great ideals of renunciation and realization. The man of God, by striving to 'see the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self', becomes enriched by the awareness of the oneness of humanity. Such men of spiritual vision set in motion potent forces that propel gigantic world movements for harmonious and corporate living.

The realization of the Kingdom of God on earth is not to be confused with any sort of apotheosized theological dogmatism or ethical humanism, however complete in itself, not to mention the popularly held idea of post-mortem and other-worldly excellence. Today, equally as in the days of Jesus Christ, persons of little or no faith—the 'Pharisees' and the 'Sadducees' of all ages—are perpetrating irreligious acts in the name of God and religion. Exclusive rights and privileges claimed by unethical and selfish persons associated with priestcraft have contributed not a little to the promotion of social disintegration and discord. The brotherhood of man will remain an unrealized dream so long as a privileged few keep a large number of ignorant and underprivileged people in a state of material degradation and spiritual penury. In the Kingdom of God that Jesus visualized there was no place for such exploitation or injustice. 'The Sermon on the Mount', says Swami Akhilananda, in his well-known work *Hindu View of Christ*, 'gives no basis for the exploitation of others by selfish and designing persons. Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth". "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". And He further stated: "And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Jesus never mentioned that only a selected few—Gentiles or Jews,



Europeans or Asiatics—would attain the Kingdom of God. There is no trace of any such differentiation in His teachings; they had universal implications. Christ Himself was universal. He meant His teachings to include all persons without distinction of creed, class, colour, or race. So when He said "love thy neighbour as thyself", He meant us to love all persons as veritable manifestations of God, the divine Self, with no distinction as to this or that type of person or this or that family'.

Life is essentially a process of assimilation from without and growth from within. Upon the smoothness and steadiness with which this process may continue to gain acceleration depends the degree of success in our efforts to make civilization the chief stabilizing factor of human unity. But this is not all and sufficient. What could make men turn from evil to good and remain virtuous even under irresistible temptation to indulge in vice? How best would it become possible for men and women of this momentous atomic age to discard envy, greed, and aggressive selfishness in order to live and let live in an environment of perfect harmony and co-operation? And in what direction might mankind turn its faltering footsteps and look for light and hope even under the most exacting conditions? In the words of J. T. Sunderland:

'There is no direction but one; in all the world's ten thousand years of search for help in her experiences of mightiest need, no at all adequate resource but one has ever been discovered. What is that? I need tell no one of you who has observed, no one of you who has read history, no one of you who has a human heart that that resource is religion,—the personal experience of religion in the soul,—the conscious, purposeful, earnest opening of the soul's doors to the incoming spirit of God, the power of God, the peace of God, the love of God, the life of God. The tides of life from above once set flowing through a man, then, but only then, there is hope for any human soul. And that is the reason why religion, particularly the religion of God's Fatherhood and unfailing Love to all His children has been able to reach, quicken, ennoble, sanctify, transform, and save men in every condition of life, as nothing else has ever done'.

There is not the least harm in men living together in groups and communities. In fact that is the best and safest way most men and women would choose to live and work in. What causes concern is the deplorable fact that the world is too much with us and that while the advance of modern civilization proceeds in arithmetical progression, modern wickedness is increasing in geometrical progression. The forces that make for disunity appear to be stronger and more powerful than those that make for unity. Not that the ultimate spiritual values are generally weaker and less useful than those disvalues that make for disunity, but that the constant and consistent denial of the higher values has resulted in weariness of the soul and spiritual inanity. The influences that divert man's attention from the solicitude for the welfare of all to that for the well-being of himself alone, or at best of his family and friends, even at the cost of commonweal, are by far the most detrimental to the growth of the brotherhood of man. 'Mankind lies groaning,' says Henri Bergson, in concluding one of his well-known works, 'half-crushed beneath the weight of its own progress. Men do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on their refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods'.

The Kingdom of God and the brotherhood of man are as it were the obverse and reverse of the manifestation of the One Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Religion teaches that God, the giver of Supreme Bliss, both mundane and spiritual, lives not quite far away in the clouds of the high heavens, but close at hand in the heart and soul of man. Men of God become more and more like God himself; become divine by realizing the Divine. He is the centre and omphalos of the entire system of created worlds and men of every



sort learn to know and love one another in and through Him. The spiritual bond of unity is eternal and all-pervading; the material is obviously ephemeral, parochial, and superficial. The former is like a structure built on rock,—firm and unassailable, and the latter like one built on sands,—infirm, and unenduring. There is an utterance in the Psalms which says, 'Unless the Lord build the house, they who build it labour in vain'. For, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit', says the Son of Man. Reiterating His teaching that the Kingdom of Heaven is possible to be re-established in every one of us, Jesus observes: 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love . . . These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my command-

ment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man may lay down his life for his friends, ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you'.

In a thorough-going spiritual regeneration of mankind lies the main hope—irrespective of races, regions, and religions—of bringing peace and understanding through brotherhood. Love and kindness generate love and kindness; selfishness breeds selfishness, leading to clash and conflict. The Rig-Vedic seer's integrated view of the whole of humanity as one family, finds vivid expression in his heartfelt benediction.

'Together walk ye, together speak ye, together know ye your minds; . . . common be your prayer, common be your end, common be your purpose, common be your deliberation; . . . common be your resolve; let your hearts be of one accord; unified be your intentions that your union (assembly) may be perfectly happy'.

## SRI SARADA DEVI

BY SWAMI VITASOKANANDA

The credential of Sri Sarada Devi to popular estimation is that she was the wife of Sri Ramakrishna. On the colourful canvas of Sri Ramakrishna's life she might appear as a speck which hardly deserves any notice. But to the discerning eye of an artist she is the background that adds to the grandeur and beauty of the picture. So complete was her self-effacement behind the great personality of Sri Ramakrishna that her existence as a separate entity perfectly merged into that of him. With the gradual unfoldment of the life-story of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi would be revealed as a living symbol of silence, sweetness, and purity. If Sri Ramakrishna's life was a historical necessity, Sarada Devi's life was a grand complement to it.

Like Sri Ramakrishna's Sri Sarada Devi's birth-place too was an obscure village. She

was born at Jayrambati, in the district of Bankura, West Bengal, on the 22nd December 1853. She was the eldest child of her parents. A turning-point was reached in her life when she was only a girl of five. Kamarpukur, where Sri Ramakrishna was born, is nearly four miles off from Jayrambati. There the relatives of Sri Ramakrishna felt distressed, mistaking his high state of God-intoxicated absorption at Dakshineswar for abnormality and madness. A life given to total contemplation and prayer, without the least interest in things mundane, was unimaginable to worldly people. His frantic efforts for immediate God-realization were interpreted as symptoms of insanity. Distorted news reached the ears of his widowed mother and his elder brother at Kamarpukur. Naturally they felt extremely worried and in



1858 Sri Ramakrishna was brought home.

An anxious mother would jump at any suggestion for the cure of her ailing son. Even an exorcist was brought for him. After a few days' stay at Kamarpukur, Sri Ramakrishna showed signs of normal behaviour. But still his divine restlessness continued unabated. Finally, it dawned upon the mind of his relations that marriage might be a surer remedy for him. But who would agree to establish matrimonial relation with a man of such abnormal behaviour? Emissaries were sent to find a suitable bride for Sri Ramakrishna. It was taken for granted that he would not agree to the marriage proposal. But to the surprise of all it was he who suggested the place where his chosen bride was waiting for him. How could one rely on the words of a madman? Still, out of curiosity, they took up the suggestion and went to Jayrambati and contacted Ramachandra, the father of Sri Sarada Devi. Arrangements were finalized and in May 1859 Sri Ramakrishna, then a young man of twenty-three, was married to Sri Sarada Devi, a girl of five. To a modern man this disparity in age between the bride and the bridegroom may seem preposterous and a violent transgression of social ethics. But it was a transfiguration of two kindred souls joined in a spiritual union. To the sense-bound mind this union is beyond the tether of its understanding. When, in March 1872, Sri Sarada Devi came to meet her husband at Dakshineswar and was asked by him whether she had come to distract him from his spiritual quest, immediate was her reply that her only ambition was to make herself perfect in the ideal which her husband had chosen. In her reply was to be found the best of the ideal of Hindu wifehood. According to Hindu conception, wifehood is a sacred vocation and is considered great 'in proportion to its giving, not to its receiving. Life-long intimacy, to be beautiful, must boast of deeper foundations'. This wedlock opened a new chapter in the relation between man and wife.

The idea of the Motherhood of God is a

unique feature in Indian religious thought. The world is the playground of the Divine Mother. All the objects and our relation with them are but Her different manifestations. The realization of this great ideal in one's life is the journey's end of a man seeking after spiritual perfection. Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi triumphantly entered into the final act when, in May 1873, he placed her on the altar of the Deity and performed before her all the rites that were required for the ceremonial worship of the Divine Mother. The worshipper and the worshipped merged themselves into a beatific consciousness of the Mother. After the performance of this last act of worship of the Divine Mother in Sri Sarada Devi, Sri Ramakrishna gave her a full share in his spiritual glory. Henceforward both looked upon each other throughout their life as being actuated by the same spirit of Kālī. Sarada Devi, one day, while massaging the feet of her husband, asked him, 'How do you look upon me?' Ramakrishna promptly replied, 'The same Divine Mother who is in the temple is now massaging my feet'. On the passing away of Ramakrishna in August 1886, addressing him she cried out, 'O Mother Kali, where hast Thou gone leaving me alone?'

One of the cardinal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is universal acceptance. Never did he shirk any responsibility or escape from any call of duty. So he fully accepted his wife and no frigid reserve stood in the way of his treatment towards her. But their relationship was always on the spiritual plane. No worldly touch could soil it. Thus the roles of the husband and the wife were played in a way which has no parallel in history. Here, at Dakshineswar, began the period of her training under the affectionate care and vigilance of her husband. And the role of the wife, the disciple, the mother, and the future teacher came to be delicately interwoven in the web of her life. Thus she received instructions from Ramakrishna equally in spiritual and secular things. Sarada Devi was to be the supreme guide in the spread of the Master's message which was meant for the



Sannyasin and the householder as well. Sri Ramakrishna trained her in such a way that both of them would receive inspiration from her life and teachings and fashion their individual lives according to their respective ideals. Basically these ideals are not different. 'Purity in every one of its forms is the central pursuit of Indian life'. A householder or a Sannyasin, in order to make his life perfect, must have to be pure in thought and deed. What other greater ideal can a seeker find than the one in Sarada Devi who was herself an embodiment of purity? Hence in her subsequent life both the exalted and the fallen used to come to her, and her blessings were showered spontaneously on all of them.

Swami Vivekananda feelingly spoke about Sri Ramakrishna that he was 'LOVE personified'. The transformation, from Sarada Devi—the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, to Sarada Devi—the Holy Mother, was achieved by her loyal and practical recognition of and steadfast devotion to this unique fact of Ramakrishna's life. Her boundless piety and overflowing love for all knew no limits. Till the last day of her life (she passed away in July 1920) countless people approached her for spiritual succour. 'The sunny and the petulant, the obedient and the wilful'—all came to put their reliance on her. For, she was the mother to every one of them in the truest sense of the term. Sister Nivedita, in a letter to the Holy Mother, wrote, 'Dear Mother! You are full of love! And it is not a flushed and violent love, like ours, and like the world's, but a gentle peace that brings good to everyone and wishes ill to none. It is a golden radiance, full of play. . . . Dearest Mother—. . . Surely you are the most wonderful thing of God—Sri Ramakrishna's own chalice of His Love for the world'.

Spirituality and renunciation are the keynote of our national life. From the dawn of her history, India has singularly refrained from merely idolizing and adoring statesmen and captains of industry. Men and women who are heroes in spiritual life are the national idols of India. In the last century, due to

circumstances which are too well known to need mention here, this age-old ideal was about to be swept off. It was at this critical period of our national life that Sri Ramakrishna came and successfully resisted the challenge which vitally affected the life and thought not only of the men but also of the women of our country. Along with Sri Ramakrishna came Sri Sarada Devi to show to our women the correct path they should follow for ushering in a new era in the history of Indian womanhood. Speaking on the Holy Mother, Sister Nivedita wrote, 'To me, it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood'. The process of reawakening Indian womanhood has already set in. While a mere unintelligent harking back to the past will be retrogressive, it will be equally negative to put our national foundation on the quicksands of exotic ideals. No one could deny the right of the Indian woman to participate freely in the larger spheres of life. But at the same time it will be tragic if they drift away from the great ideals of purity, humility, and self-sacrifice. Sister Nivedita's comparison is, therefore, significant. She writes: 'Woman in the West may thirst for the glory of love or the power of wealth; here (in India) her characteristic dreams are of perfection and purity of faith'. The life of the Holy Mother represents not only the best of the ancient ideals of Indian womanhood but sets forth new ones for the future too. In her the mother's heart is conjoined with the hero's will. 'The stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood'. Her life is 'a poem of the Indian soil, full of music'.

In this month falls the hundredth birthday of the Holy Mother. Next year this time we shall have the unique privilege of witnessing her Birth Centenary. She is the living epitome of truth, beauty, goodness, and holiness. By celebrating her Centenary in a befitting manner we exalt ourselves to the higher values of life, the current of which is unfortunately now at a very low ebb.



# SISTER NIVEDITA

BY KALPALATA MUNSHI

The act of plucking a flower for worship is lovely. With the tenderest care a fresh blossom is chosen from amongst budding and withering flowers. In its natural perfection it is then laid on the altar, at the feet of God. Nivedita—the Dedicated, chosen by her Master—Swami Vivekananda—to be offered at the altar of this country was such a flower of perfection.

Born in a far off land, brought up in European traditions, and educated and trained according to Western ideas, she was chosen as the transmitter of the Swami's ideals and dreams between him and his own people. In this selection the glory goes to the elect, but more to the Master. For Nivedita, when summoned to accept the onerous task of serving this land, was already a qualified and experienced teacher, a keen reader and thinker, proud, determined and self-possessed, a lover of her own country to the core, experimenting with her own ideas on education, and building up a mission in life. It is not by a magician's wand that overnight a Westerner forgot the memory of her own self and became a Hindu. It was a conscious and willing process of self-transformation, a conquering of life inch by inch, before Nivedita reached the ideal of being Nivedita, the Dedicated One.

It was in 1895 that Sister Nivedita, then Miss Margaret E. Noble (of Irish parentage and birth, born at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone in 1867) first met Swami Vivekananda in London. 'The time was a cold Sunday afternoon in November, and the place . . . a West End drawing-room'. The Sister, in her book *The Master as I saw Him*, describes her attitude and reaction after the first meeting. Confident not to be influenced by another person's ideas, prepared not to be convinced by another's propaganda, and watchful of guarding her own judgments, she, with the others, ex-

pressed her opinion that all these things that had been discussed had been said before and they were not new.

But the intellectual honesty of Sister Nivedita did not allow her to dismiss either the person or his message with indifference. As she pondered over his words she discovered a new and powerful thought-current flowing under the apparently common words. Three points struck her most: 'First, the breadth of his religious culture; second, the great intellectual newness and interest of the thought he had brought to us; and thirdly, the fact that his call was sounded in the name of that which was strongest and finest, and was not in any way dependent on the meaner elements in man'.<sup>1</sup>

But it must be remembered that Swamiji's words alone did not act as a stimulus to invigorate her potential powers and make her accept his mastership. To speak in her own words: 'But it was his *character* to which I had thus done obeisance. As a religious teacher, I saw that although he had a system of thought to offer, nothing in that system would claim him for a moment, if he found that truth led elsewhere. And to that extent that this recognition implies, I became his disciple'.<sup>2</sup>

Her intellectual and ideological acceptance of her Master's teachings made her take the first step in the direction of her new life of adopting India as her motherland, offering her services in her cause. She writes: 'It was in the course of a conversation much more casual than this, that he turned to me and said, "I have plans for the women of my own country in which you, I think, could be of great help to me"—and I knew that I had heard a call which would change my life'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Master as I saw Him*, (6th Ed., 1948), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.



More time and thought are usually expended in the attempt to take the initial step which changes one's life, but the irony of it is that the real struggle begins after that. For till there is identification between the ideals of the teacher and the taught peace is not found. Clash of wills and personalities, efforts at protecting one's own judgments and upholding of egoistic and assertive opinions cause much suffering before profound peace is found in resigning to the master's will without bitterness, and with fullness of faith. Sister Nivedita passed through this struggle and felt it very keenly as she unreservedly says: 'My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn, and how short was the time for learning to be and the first of lessons doubtless is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught. But I had been little prepared for that constant rebuke and attack upon all my most cherished prepossessions which was now my lot. Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness which I experienced at this time'.<sup>4</sup>

But due to the Master's love and grace she soon overcame the difficulty and once devoting herself with perfect passivity did no longer feel the strain of totally absorbing his ideas and working them out with a passion. It is noteworthy how the Sister grasped and unfolded the subtle paradox on the part of the taught in this case. The taught, the disciple, is passive—'serenely passive',—but under this attitude lies the greatest of creative acts a human being strives to accomplish, namely, complete dedication. This life-experience and experiment enabled her to speak forth in definite terms how after one meets a Guru perfection in education is reached. In her 'Paper on Education-II', she states the three elements necessary for a perfect education, and while discussing the third element she says: 'But when the *guru* comes, or the idea that is to dominate the life is appre-

hended, there may be a keen initial struggle, but after it there is a period of profound apparent quiet. To see the thing as it appears to the mind of the master, is the one necessity. To serve him, acting as his hands and feet, as it were, in order that one's mind and heart may be made one with his; to serve him silently, broodingly, with the constant attempt to assimilate his thought, this is the method. Throughout this period, there is no room for rebellion. Eventually the *guru* emancipates: he does not bind. It would be a poor service to him, if we felt compelled in his name to arrest the growth of an idea. Eventually we have to realize that the service to which he has called us is not his own, but that of Truth itself, and that this may take any form'.<sup>5</sup>

This is how, we find, Nivedita beautifully understood the lofty ideal of Guru-Shishya relationship and paddled her own canoe to the shores of perfection. Thus perfected as a dedicated worker, she gave propriety to her own name 'Nivedita'—given by the Master,—and became truly an altar-blossom. Her dedication and devotion cannot be measured. Only her life shines like a beacon-light for all dedicated workers and her words convey her heartfelt yearning for a life of perfection: 'Shall we grudge a life, with its hour of toil, that we may feast our eyes upon some symbol of perfection? Shall we measure the devotion that, given without stint, is to make of us the *puja* flowers laid before the feet of God? In a world of infinite variety the vision of Reality ends every road. Let us then push on with brave hearts, not fainting by the way. Whatever we have taken in hand to do, let us make the means our end. Let us pursue after the ideal for the ideal's own sake, and cease not, stop not, till we are called by the voice that cannot go unheeded to put away childish things and enter the city of the soul'.<sup>6</sup>

Before Sister Nivedita came to India, she

<sup>5</sup> *Hints on National Education in India*, (3rd Ed., 1923), pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> *Religion and Dharma*, (1st Indian Ed., 1952), pp. 114-115.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.



was already a professed educationalist. Having obtained a teacher's training, she gained practical experience as teacher in various schools in London. In 1892, she opened at Wimbledon a school of her own and strove to give expression to her ideals of girls' education with which she always came to be identified.

With this locus standi in the field of education, it was natural that she evinced interest in Swamiji's educational plans for Indian women and accepted his invitation to come to India. Early in 1898 she reached the shores of India. From May to October of the same year Sister Nivedita had the opportunity to travel with Swamiji in the North-West, Kumaon, and Kashmir regions of the country. These months of travel with her Master proved to be intensively formative in her training in discipleship. For, the close contact with the Master helped her to understand and evaluate the nation; to appreciate its culture and traditions; to judge its heights of greatness and gauge its abyss of weaknesses; and above all, to love it as her own motherland, loyally and passionately.

It was at the end of that summer,<sup>7</sup> that she discussed with Swamiji her plan of work. He was confident that he had laid the trust and responsibility of the work on capable shoulders and, therefore, gave her freedom to work out her own plans. When asked to criticize her plans, the Master quietly said, 'You ask me to criticize; but I cannot do that. For, I regard you as inspired, quite as much as I am'.

To make a beginning, the Sister had planned to open tentatively a girls' school in Calcutta—'To learn', as she says, 'what was wanted, to determine where I myself stood, to explore the very world of which my efforts were to become a part'. With this idea in view, a Girls' School (which it seems she proposed to name 'Ramakrishna School for Girls', but which, after her death, was named 'Sister Nivedita Girls' School')\* was formally

started in Baghbazar (in Calcutta) on the 12th November 1898, with the blessings of the Holy Mother and in the presence of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda. The School was founded on the kindergarten system and included the teaching of English and Bengali language and literature, some elementary science, and handicrafts. The aim of teaching these subjects was not for enforcing a disciplined training only but also enabling the pupil to bring out the best in her. In other words, it was not only to be informative but formative. Due to various difficulties the School stopped functioning after some months. Sister Nivedita went abroad to collect funds and popularize her ideas. It was at this time that she put on paper her 'Project of the Ramakrishna School for Girls' before the public in America. In 1902 she returned to India and was joined in her work by another ardent American disciple of Swamiji, Sister Christine. Together they reorganized the School.

Having obtained a sincere collaborator like Sister Christine, who looked after the organization of the School, Sister Nivedita was left free to widen the platform of her activities. She gave inspiring lectures to the student world and contributed a series of articles in the leading magazines of the day. Her lectures on education have now been compiled in the book entitled *Hints on National Education in India*. National education, which meant according to her, 'a training which has a strong colour of its own, and begins by relating the child to his home and country, through all that is familiar, but ends by making him *free of all*, that is true, cosmopolitan, and universal'.<sup>8</sup> Education, in its broadest sense, according to her, meant the scope or opportunity given to an individual to canalize and develop his parts. It was not to be a privilege of a few in society. It was a sacred duty of the learned to teach, it was as much a duty of the unlettered to learn. That is why she says, '... education, to be

<sup>7</sup> On July 24, as she records it in her *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda*, (3rd Ed., 1948), p. 113.

\* See *Notes and Comments*.

<sup>8</sup> *Hints on National Education in India*, p. 29.



of any avail, must extend through all degrees, from its lowest and humblest applications, up to the highest and most disinterested grades. We must have technical education and we must have also higher research, . . . We must have education of women, as well as education of men. We must have secular education, as well as religious. And, almost more important than any of these, we must have education of the people, and for this, we must depend upon ourselves'.<sup>9</sup>

The Sister's ideas do not put forward any original system of training or schooling. She gives expression to familiar thoughts which have yet a dynamic force, as they carry with them the force of her conviction. They strike at the very fundamentals of our lives, gradually rising to higher and nobler sentiments. They reflect the purest thoughts on Vidyā that our ancient teachers held and yet abound in the modern ideas of the necessity of manual and technical training accompanied by higher researches. They aim at developing the personality of an individual and at the same time making him fully conscious of his duty towards his nation. But though the primary aim of such an education lies in making him stand on his own legs, the Sister never cherished the idea that acquisition of knowledge was for that end only. On the contrary she fiercely denounced it: 'There is nothing so belittling to the human soul as the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of worldly reward. There is nothing so degrading to a nation, as coming to look upon the life of the mind as a means to bread-winning. Unless we strive for truth because we love it, and must at any cost attain, unless we live the life of thought out of our own rejoicing in it, the great things of heart and intellect will close their doors to us'.<sup>10</sup>

Sister Nivedita touches upon two problems which are vexing our educationists even today, namely, the problem of the language and the place of foreign education, in a true scheme of education. With regard to the first ques-

tion, the Sister writes: 'Nor need we regret that we fall back, for this, upon our own strength. Education for the people is, in the first place, reading, writing, and arithmetic. As long as we carry the burden ourselves, there need be no juggling with the geographical distribution of languages. . . . We must do all we can for the simplification of the language-problem'.<sup>11</sup> Regarding the second point she opines that in a true education the place of foreign culture is never at the beginning. Beautifully she makes a difference between pure knowledge, which is science, and the emotional expression of talents, which is art. And she concedes that for the former there can be neither native nor foreign, while the latter is purely local.

These thoughts breathe life into the paralysed ideals of our nation, and even though written four decades ago are useful for our nascent national life. For this Sister Nivedita's name will always shine bright in the firmament of our national thinkers.

The greatest lesson that Sister Nivedita learnt from her Master was to understand the country which she was prepared to serve. In the heart of Swami Vivekananda raged, day and night, the fire of love for the country, and a spark of it was sufficient to inflame the noble soul of the Sister.

After coming to India with the spirit of service, her Master once asked her to which nation she belonged then. Candidly she spoke of her passionate loyalty to the English flag, 'giving to it much of the feeling that an Indian woman would give to her *Thākoor*'.<sup>12</sup> But gradually as she began to understand the Indian way of life she became inflamed with a burning love for the country, and as was characteristic of her, surrendered herself utterly to it. So much so that she used to tell the young girls, 'Take up the rosary and let the Mantra "Bhārata-varsha, Bhārata-varsha, Bhārata-varsha, Mā, Mā, Mā" be on your lips always', and she herself would do

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda*, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. I.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. II.



that. She saw through the significance of the rituals and customs—Dharma (National Righteousness, as she preferred to translate it)—and reinterpreting them, revitalizing them, inspired the youth of the day to follow them up. She defended the social customs of our country against the slanders of the missionaries,<sup>13</sup> upheld the national ideals, and translated them into modern equivalents.

Bearing in mind that Sister Nivedita did all this at a time when the Hindu mind had lost its balance of judgment between the orthodox and the Western influences pulling in opposite directions, it would be difficult to measure the immensity of the service rendered by her. With her incisive intellect, strengthened by a glowing faith, she attacked and at the same time built up all the fronts of life, political, social, literary, and artistic. Many great men of Bengal like Sri Aurobindo, Abanindranath Tagore, and J. C. Bose were, to some extent, influenced by and received encouragement and help from Sister Nivedita in their respective spheres of work.

Admiration of the country, however, did not blind her to the country's imperfections. Her diagnosis was correct when she said that 'the Indian people as a whole, for the last two generations, have been as men walking in a dream, without manhood, without power to react freely against conditions, without even common sense'.<sup>14</sup> And still India lives and hopes to rise again. Many have tried to find out the source of her revitalizing force. Is it her geographical position? Is it her huge sea of humanity? Is it her cultural heritage? Or is it her philosophy and religion? The critics who say that India today basks only in the sunlight of past glory and never thinks of the future and of marching forward with the other nations of the world are grossly mistaken. They lack a proper understanding of the country. Only a few like Swami Vivekananda, who held the pulse of the nation

in their hands, could understand India's potential powers. India has always built the future on the past. In darkness she has always thought of light and that is why she still lives.

With this eye of a historian, who visualizes the future prospects of a nation by the study of its past, Sister Nivedita expressed hopes in the rise of a New India: 'The mind of our civilization is awake once more, and we know that the long ages of theocratic development are perfected, while before us lies the task of actualizing those mighty ideals of the civic and national life by which the theocratic achievements of our fathers are to be protected and conserved. We are now to go out, as it were, into the waste spaces about our life, and build there these towers and bastions of self-organization and mutual aid, by which we are yet to become competent to deal with the modern world and all its forces of aggression. The bricks lie there, in abundance, for our work. The elements abound, in our history, our literature, our traditions, and our customs, by which we can make of ourselves a strong and coherent people. It needs only that we understand our own purpose, and the method of its accomplishment'.<sup>15</sup>

Almost all her writings echo the same sentiments of national renaissance. Her writings have been more or less compiled in different volumes of which the following are permeated with the thoughts of the country, namely, *The Web of Indian Life, Religion and Dharma, Footfalls of Indian History, The Studies from an Eastern Home, Civic and National Ideals*, and *Aggressive Hinduism*. These writings bring to our mind her complete identification with this country and it would not make us hesitate to call her 'the Daughter of Ind'.

Having thus served her country for fourteen years, Sister Nivedita lay down to eternal rest in the lap of her Motherland, on the 13th October 1911, only to inspire and arouse many of India's daughters to serve the country likewise.

<sup>13</sup> Vide, *Lambs among Wolves*, pp. 19-29.

<sup>14</sup> *Aggressive Hinduism*, (3rd Ed.), p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Civic and National Ideals*, (4th Ed.), p. 4-5.



# THE HOLY MOTHER

## GLIMPSES OF HER PERSONALITY

BY SWAMI ANANYANANDA

Exactly after an year from now will commence the celebration of the Birth Centenary<sup>1</sup> of Sri Sarada Devi, more popularly and affectionately known as the Holy Mother. She was the consort and first disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of modern India.

The Holy Mother may no doubt appear as one in the long line of the great women of India<sup>2</sup> who have shed lustre on Indian womanhood and illumined the pages of our history by their saintly life, pure character, great learning, and heroic deeds. Yet, to the modern Indian the Holy Mother's life represents something unique, something easily the highest and best in the Hindu ideal of womanhood, being as it was one of artless simplicity, piety, purity, and self-sacrifice. She stands out as having been at once a perfect wife, a perfect nun, a perfect mother, and a perfect teacher, discharging the various duties and functions in an accomplished manner, proving equal to the task of each role she was called upon to assume. All the same, the life that she lived from day to day was so silent and unostentatious that its very simplicity and uneventful character perplex us. Notwithstanding her rare spiritual attainments, she lived and worked like an ordinary woman, doing all the duties of a household. To the superficial eye, there was in her nothing conspicuously outstanding, but deep down her whole heart was fully awakened to the awareness of eternal divine consciousness.

Should one allow oneself to be guided by

mere objective standards of an eventful life of thought and action, there would be every likelihood of one's missing the true perspective of the sublime life the Holy Mother lived. Greatness of the highest order is measured not in terms of political upheavals or social reforms or such other external manifestations but in terms of the spiritual potential which, by its own impact, awakens men to a sense of the higher values of life and fashions out of them perfect and exemplary characters. That is the sign of real spiritual greatness.

The Holy Mother, in this sense, amply justifies her title to the illustrious role she played as the spiritual guide to many a weary soul. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the mantle of spiritual leadership descended on her. The Master (Sri Ramakrishna) had prepared her for this task. So it came to her naturally. From the very beginning of her association with him, by marriage, Sri Ramakrishna gave a powerful stimulus to her spiritual growth. This gradually brought about a great transformation in her,<sup>3</sup> making her a fit partner in the extraordinary life that he lived. Her own life, complementary to the great spiritual force that was Sri Ramakrishna, had a tremendous influence over the lives of hundreds of devoted aspirants.

The performance of the *ṣoḍaśī-pūjā*<sup>4</sup> by Sri Ramakrishna, as the culmination of all his spiritual Sādhana, opens up before us an altogether new and significant aspect of the Mother's personality. The Master worshipped her as the Divine Mother and surrendered himself completely to her and offered her—the Deity in front of him—'the fruits of his

<sup>1</sup> The Centenary celebrations will be observed during the period between December 1953 and December 1954.

<sup>2</sup> The Centenary Celebration Committee has planned to commemorate the occasion by bringing out the publication 'The Great Women of India', dealing with their lives and contributions in various spheres of life and different epochs of our history.

<sup>3</sup> *Sri Sarada Devi: The Holy Mother* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras) (Second Edition), p. 44 et seqq.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45.



austerities, his rosary, himself, and everything that was his'.<sup>5</sup> This great event in her life made the Holy Mother not only a copartner in the spiritual glory and responsibility of the Master but also a vital instrument in the fulfilment of the Master's mission. All who felt orphaned by the passing away of the Master went to the Mother for spiritual solace and guidance.

\* \* \*

Purity in thought, word, and deed is the foundation of spiritual life. The Holy Mother was the very embodiment of purity. Referring to his own spiritual realizations, the Master used to say, 'The credit for this was no less due to her'. Her unsullied purity was his shield and armour. Was she not too pure and noble to drag her saintly husband to a life of worldliness? She told him that she had become his wife not to pull him down from his spiritual heights but only to help him in the attainment of his ideals and aspirations. If she desired to choose the worldly way of conjugal life, it was open to her. The Master gave her the choice. But she was constituted differently.<sup>6</sup> She, as the wife endued with purity and nobility of character, came to be united with him not for leading a worldly life but for becoming a real *sahadharmini* of her God-intoxicated husband. What she most cherished was the longing to live with him, to serve him, and to mould her own life after the pattern of the Master's.

We get a glimpse of this aspect of the Holy Mother's personality, viz. the degree of excellence her spotless character had reached, from her own words: 'On moonlit nights I would look at the moon and pray with folded hands, "May my heart be as pure as the rays of yonder moon!" or "O Lord, there is a stain even in the moon, but let there not be the least trace of stain in my mind!"'

\* \* \*

The Mother's life was not all smooth sailing. She had her own trials and tribulations

that normally is the lot of persons living in family surroundings. But she was able to overcome them all by her own resourceful nature and inner spiritual strength. There are many instances which indicate how in dealing with difficult situations she exhibited great presence of mind, extraordinary courage, and even physical strength. Sometimes she won others over through her innocence and guilelessness.

The incident of the 'dacoit father'<sup>8</sup> shows how by her innocent behaviour, gentle words, and perfect trust she brought about such a remarkable transformation in the evil intentions of even a dacoit that he felt paternal affection towards her, looked after her comforts, and escorted her for a long distance till she again met her companions.

Another remarkable incident that took place in Kamarpukur reveals the incredible courage and presence of mind the Holy Mother possessed. To relate it in her own words: 'Harish (who was a devotee of the Master and had turned insane) was then staying at Kamarpukur for a few days. One day, when I was entering the house after visiting a neighbour, he began to chase me. He was then in a distracted state of mind. He had lost his senses on account of his wife. There was then no one else in the house. I did not know where to go and ran quickly behind the barn. He would not, however, leave me. I ran and ran round it seven times till I got exhausted. Then my true self came out. I threw him to the ground, pressed my knee on his chest, drew out his tongue and slapped him hard on the cheeks until my fingers became red with slapping. He began to gasp for breath'.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, a worthy example of and an object-lesson in bold self-defence in a helpless situation a woman can possibly find herself in!

Her numerous other qualities of head and heart expressed themselves on many an occasion. But withal, her life was all through marked by extreme simplicity. Her saintly

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.



husband had demonstrated to her the joy and glory of a simple and unostentatious life. And she actually lived it.

\* \* \*

The unique relationship that existed between Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, even in their married life, was that between master and disciple. Yet the Mother was never oblivious of her duties as a devoted wife. From the time she began to stay permanently at Dakshineswar, she was always ready, any time of the day or night, to serve him and attend to his personal needs. During this period, one of her regular duties was to cook for the Master; the various dishes had to be carefully prepared in order to suit his special taste and delicate stomach. And those were also the years when she was practising severe austerities and spiritual Sadhanas under the direct guidance of the Master.

What strikes one most in the personality of the Holy Mother, is the *mother* in her. Motherhood is the highest ideal of Indian womanhood, and the Holy Mother was the veritable personification of that ideal. Hence has she been considered 'Sri Ramakrishna's last word on Indian womanhood'.<sup>10</sup> To every man, woman, and child who came to her, she was mother *par excellence*. The motherly love in her was always uppermost and her solicitude for all who sought refuge in her was unparalleled. This manifestation of her unbounded love was irresistible and it attracted devotees in large numbers, from far and near and even from beyond the seas. Whoever came to her felt that here was one, dearer and nearer than their own kith and kin, before whom they could unburden their minds and to whom they could confide their innermost thoughts. She, too, extended her love and grace to one and all, without any distinction of rank, race, caste, or creed.

A few instances from her life, which portray in bold relief these aspects of her magnanimity and universal love may be cited here:

Once the Holy Mother was requested not

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

to allow a certain young disciple to come to her presence on account of some misconduct on his part. She remarked tenderly, 'If my child gets covered with mud or dust, is it not my duty to cleanse him and take him on my lap?'<sup>11</sup>

When a woman who had not led a very chaste life went to her in a mood of sincere repentance and made an unreserved confession of her sins, the Mother embraced her with great warmth of feeling, uttering these words of assurance, 'Don't despair for whatever you have done. You will get over all your sinful tendencies'. She also gave initiation to that woman.<sup>12</sup>

When the Mother's house at Jayrambati was being built, a number of Muslims of a neighbouring village were employed as labourers. It was known that their previous record was not good as they had turned to predatory pursuits at times. There was naturally great consternation among the villagers when these men were employed. But the Mother was unperturbed. One day, one of these Muslim employees took some bananas to her and said, 'Mother, I have brought these for the Master. Would you accept them?' The Mother accepted the offering very gladly.<sup>13</sup>

On another occasion, the Mother took one of these Muslims (Amjed by name) into her house for a meal. After feeding him, the Mother herself washed the place where he had taken food. Seeing this, her orthodox niece, who was standing at a distance, exclaimed, 'O aunt, you are going to lose caste'. The Mother reproved her, saying, 'Keep quiet. Even this Amjed is my son exactly in the sense that Sarat (Swami Saradananda) is!'<sup>14</sup>

Once, during the time of the Durga Puja, she asked a disciple to purchase some cloth for the children of her brothers. The Swadeshi Movement was then in full swing. He purchased only cloth of Indian make,

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.



but the women of the family did not approve of it and made suggestions as to what they wanted. The disciple, out of patriotic feeling, replied in an excited voice, 'But what you want are all foreign cloth. How can I buy them?' The Holy Mother was present there. She said with a smile, 'My child, they (the Western people) too are my children. I must accommodate everyone. Can I ever be exclusive? Buy the things they want'.<sup>15</sup>

These instances,—only a few among scores of such in the Mother's life,—are not merely passing events but tangible pointers to the large-heartedness, tolerance, and all-comprehensive vision she possessed. One can appreciate the significance of these events all the more if one reminds oneself of the political, social, and historical circumstances of the times when the Mother lived and also of the conservative surroundings and orthodox traditions and prejudices in which she was brought up. The Holy Mother broke the hard shell of rigid orthodoxy, as it were, and it did call for enormous courage and forcefulness of personality on the part of any one, in those days, to dare to do such things.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

This was possible for the Holy Mother because she was fully conscious of the part she had to play in the fulfilment of the Master's mission. When Western disciples started coming to her, after Swami Vivekananda's successful mission in the West, she accepted them all naturally and spontaneously as her own, saying, 'Those people are also my children'.<sup>16</sup> She mixed with them freely and even ate and slept with them, looking upon them as belonging to the spiritual family of Sri Ramakrishna. She fully appreciated and whole-heartedly blessed the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement and its activities, realizing their usefulness and importance in the regeneration of our national life.

In short, it could be said that though the spirit of motherhood was dominant in the life of the Holy Mother, she also combined in herself the salient features of a perfect wife, a holy nun, and a spiritual teacher of a high order—all in one. Her own words, 'Sri Ramakrishna left me behind to manifest the motherhood of God to the world',<sup>17</sup> amply bear out the vivid and lofty appeal her life and teachings possess for us.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

## THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

(Continued from the November issue)

The source of all reflection and observation is life; and our problem is to understand life as such. But this understanding has two facets. On the one hand one can take an inordinate pleasure in theorizing and in mere speculation. Such are the hair-splitting discussions of the Sophists. But a theory to be a theory must be forced on us by the facts of life. These facts themselves enter into our

minds in our experiences. Here we should realize that it is an individual that has the experiences. And the individual is single and moves as a unity. All the experiences are related to him and harmonized in him. To these we bring certain presuppositions or some definite ideas. These ideas may or may not be relevant; but it is the duty of philosophy to enquire into the nature of these ideas.



These are popularly known as innate ideas, and we are all familiar with Locke's refutation of these. But with Kant we embark upon a new field known as the '*a priori*'. As long as we use these ideas, we need not consider the question of how we acquire them. We are only to ask, how these ideas are related to the conscious individual. Plato's doctrine of Reminiscence provides one explanation to this question. But that is an answer which most of us do believe, and belief is a thing which does not seem to carry much weight with the reason of man. Unless the nature of consciousness has some similarity with these ideas we cannot have them. Does it mean that the ideas we have of human values and the like represent the nature of consciousness?

At this stage some of us will begin wondering whether after all there is anything like consciousness. Considering an example, we can, with the help of the illustration, arrive at the meaning of consciousness, a meaning which will render a satisfactory account of matter. Let us take the sculptor working on a marble and giving us a beautiful statue. Who has given the statue? It is not the sculptor alone. The marble too was responsible in its own way. The potentiality of the statue lay hidden in the marble and the sculptor had the insight to feel it. The marble is the material copartner of the sculptor in the physical universe. Both the marble and the sculptor co-operated in this adventure. And with his superior intelligence the individual began controlling his object and laying bare its implicit capabilities. In the evolution of the work, both worked together in the sense that they were united harmoniously in this venture. The finished product represents the meaning or significance of that unity. In other words, in that peculiar unity of the sculptor and the marble, there was an idea struggling for expression, for life, for consciousness. And the statue is that piece or element of consciousness. That is, there is no pure matter devoid of conscious life and significance. All matter is potential mind. This

may appear to be a restatement of the old pantheism. But it is something that presses itself on our minds and we cannot brush it aside. Nature is potential mind or soul, while the individual soul turns out to be the transition between Nature and the Absolute Spirit. Hence it is that the individual is only a finite centre of experience, a self that is delimited or finitized. Any philosophical doctrine has to start from this position. For, the self is the first affirmation of any consistent metaphysic. Without the self there is no experience, and equally so without the object. These two taken in abstraction are two fleeting phantoms, the creations of a diseased mind. And every experience has a certain character, a certain unity. It is a character which does not belong to the various parts of this whole, taken severally.

To consider the statue once again. In estimating it we generally give out that impression which has struck our minds. It is in reality a faint reproduction of the impression we feel in an inarticulate way during the moments of the experience. Our experience of the statue is infinitely richer than the knowledge we have of it; and we often feel the loss of self-confidence in explaining or interpreting that which we have experienced intensely. Thus again I can have a clear knowledge of my friend's headache, and I can and do know the type of pain he must be having. Compare this with my experience of my own headache. My own is richer, intenser, and more profound. There is some inexplicable feeling, which is highly suggestive, at the very core of my experience. This happens because in experience we do not separate the various elements; we accept them as a totality, as a unity, as a system. But in knowledge, as we are familiar with the concept in our books on logic and elsewhere, we dissociate ourselves from the object; we pretend to have given up our organic connection with the object; and so we begin analysing the object in isolation. And in this violent isolation, the object has no real existence, no truth even. We effect a false severance in the knowledge



situation by transgressing the sanctity of unity that permeates the experience.

Our alleged knowledge, the knowledge which we describe as rational, is the first fruit of the transgression of the unity of experience. The more our knowledge approaches the unity of experience, the more will be its value for us. Thus on the one hand we have the knowledge of the object as in itself it really is; and on the other we endeavour to arrive at the knowledge of the object as an integral element of the experience situation. We have, therefore, two knowledges, the higher and the lower, or the transcendental and the empirical. As the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* declares, '*Dve vidye veditavye, ... parā caivāparā ca*' 'Two kinds of knowledge must be known, . . . they are the Higher Knowledge and the lower knowledge' (I.i.4). And also as the *Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad* puts it, 'He who is aware that both knowledge and ignorance should be pursued together, overcomes death through ignorance and obtains immortality through knowledge' (II). The lower knowledge is 'Avidyā' and offers us a clue to comprehend finitude, while the higher knowledge gives us the realization of immortality itself, the experience of the everlasting yea. They are interrelated and one is not possible without the other.

The relation between these two is graphically interpreted in a triplet of the *Rg-Veda*, known as the Suparna triplet. It opens with the verse,

*'Dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā,  
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte;  
Tayor-anyah pippalam svādvatti,  
anaśnannanyo abhicākaṣṭi'.*

'Two birds, united always and in close friendship, cling to the same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit; the other looks on without eating' (I.164.20).

There are two birds living as two close friends; both are on the same tree and they embrace it. One of them eats the sweet fruit thereof, while the other sits without eating. One has the higher knowledge, while the other

has only the lower. Yet both cling to the tree of life and are adventuring into the realm of the Spirit, but only one of them can enjoy the fruit thereof. Still the lower knowledge is an essential prerequisite of the higher. The neglect of the lower will bring about the pre-occupation with the barren forms of thought that are always in a world beyond. Philosophy has nothing to do with these, for it primarily concerns itself with the present, with the immediate. And such immediates are life, consciousness, and fact. These three are embodied to the finite mind by the finite mind in three great realms of life, viz. the realms of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. These three constitute the subject of philosophy.

That there is a close connection between these three supreme appearances of the finite life and the Absolute Reality is a doctrine rooted in the Upanishads, where we come across passages like, '*Satyam jñānam-anantam Brahma*' 'The Real, the Conscious, the Infinite, is Brahman', '*Vijñānam-ānandam Brahma*' 'Knowledge, Bliss, is Brahman'. These three appearances give us a clue to the nature and realization of Reality, for they manifest the principle of Reality in a way that revitalizes the individual self. But how is this connection known? The answer lies in the doctrine of the two knowledges. The higher knowledge is the knowledge of the nature of unity or system which experience gives. It is synthetic, while the other is only analytic. The latter can become true only if the spirit of the unity of experience breathes through it. Let us go back for a moment to the statue. The statue, say that of Venus of Milo, seems to suggest so many ideas and feelings that for a time we forget what we are. The very artistic expression seems to have this power. In other words, the very act of composing or creating a work of art implies the very inability of the creative artist to give a complete and perfect expression to his experience. This experience comprehends within itself the knowledge we express. This aspect of the problem throws light on a similar



aspect. No two experiences of the same object by the same individual are identical with each other. A third or fourth observation of the same statue sometimes modifies our knowledge to such an extent that there may not be any apparent connection between the two knowledges. We return to the classics willingly and many a time with greater vigour and greater enthusiasm. And every time, we derive something new, something fresh. But if it happens to be a text-book for some examination, no one can honestly say that he is reading for the fourth or fifth time with real enthusiasm. In the former case we expect Value and we do realize it. In the latter we derive utility. And utility is a thing which does not quieten the yearnings of the soul. The utility that an object gives is derived from the rational nature of that object; and by rational here we have to mean that which is within the bounds of common sense, that is, it involves the relational consciousness. But the Value of an object is not so derived from the relational nature. It involves the unity of the experience and reveals the nature of the object as an element in the whole, in the system.

This universe is so rich and varied and complex that it cannot be comprehended in a single moment of logical theory. Yet we experience the very nature of the object. This is the same as the significance or meaning it has for the experiencing mind. The significance it has for us, or the meaning it conveys to us, has a factor which is beyond the power of knowledge to reveal. And yet we cannot speak of it as irrational, for here we realize a supreme moment of our life where reason is highly articulated. Confucius discusses an important question which has a great bearing on our problem here. He asks: What is the duty of the son when the father has committed a crime? Likewise, what is the father's duty when the son has committed a crime? Elementary knowledge of the law and the sway of ordinary reason will tell us that the father should not spare his son, nor should the son keep quiet. But suppose for a

moment that we ourselves are directly involved in such a situation. Would we follow this procedure? Assuredly not. And Confucius tells us that the son has no right to expose his father, nor has the father an obligation to hand the son over to the iron hand of the law. Why? The reason is evident. Over and above the demands of ordinary reason there is a higher principle at work in human life. The relation of the father to the son, or of the son to the father is not governed by pure reason that dominates our conceptions of utility. There is an element higher than this. It is a spiritual relation that governs them. And if one were to answer that he sees no relations like these in the universe, he is untrue to the nature of his experiences. This bond of unity between the father and the son is more real than anything else in the universe. It is greater and more valuable than that which we generally call reason. For here alone we have an example of the real and true nature of reason. It is this supra-relational reason or consciousness that makes manifest a system or unity and enables us to have glimpses into the nature of Reality. There is thus a factor in life which appears to be irrational, but which in reality is the supreme embodiment of the real nature of thought or of the rational. It is the presence of this element and the insight into it that makes any object valuable to us, as distinct from utility.

The three supreme appearances mentioned above are the three great values of human life. Values get their significance from their teleological relation to life, and hence the significance of life itself is to be derived from the values which it embodies. As a consequence, Value turns out to be an indefinable and inexplicable concept, yet appearing as a function of the system or unity of experience. Values, therefore, are not subjective fictions. They exist and are real. They govern human life to a very great extent. They are operative and effective in and on human minds and in human action. They are embodied in the objective institutions of society, which,



therefore, become the subjects of philosophical enquiry. They determine the nature of the objects and as such are imbedded in the system of Reality. As such Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, which are characterized as the forms of the Absolute or Brahman, have a good deal to say regarding the nature of the universe and of Reality. In other words, it is these three values that determine the nature of the individual self, the nature of the finite mind. And any philosophy worth the name cannot afford to ignore these values and the study of these values; for it is in and through these values that an individual can become, in the words of Plato, 'the spectator of all time and of all existence'.

The study of philosophy, therefore, is an education in itself; and as in all true education, here too the individual must direct his mind to the proper objects. He must study the environment, the universe around him. But this study demands a close affinity between the nature of the finite mind and the nature of the object pursued. In other words, the values which determine the nature of the finite mind are to be developed by a study of the embodiments of the values concerned. It is only thus that we can enter into the meaning of the world; for the philosophic mind always yearns for the principles or laws or unities governing the diversities and pluralities of our experiences. And the philosophic nature involves a profound passion for Reality,

a passion that can be quietened only when we can get at Reality and be at one with it. This is the real human element. And the study of philosophy satisfies all the demands that are implicit in human nature. And yet the study of philosophy is not a thing of a short duration. It is coextensive with life, since all education means keeping the soul alive, and since a philosophical study of human life can never be divorced from experience proper. For this education we have a variety of things that help us immensely. They are those things which human nature has produced in the course of its long history. These are religion, science, art, literature, and the institutions of mankind. All these are united by a single thread and the duty of philosophy is the realization of the experiences which these generate and the interpretation of these experiences in the light of principles derived from the world of Reality. To this end philosophers of the past have made endeavours and it is our duty to imbibe all that tradition can offer us and, with the help and co-operation of this rich heritage, to embark on the great adventure called life, so that we too may hold for a while glimpses of that world of Reality and of

'The light that never was on sea or land,  
The consecration, and the poet's dream',  
—so that our souls may 'have sight of that  
immortal sea which brought us hither'.

(Concluded)

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'In Shankaracharya, we saw tremendous intellectual power, throwing the scorching light of reason upon everything. We want today that bright sun of intellectuality, joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful, infinite heart of love and mercy. This union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples. . . . The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now they too are coming to the same results. We find that searching through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that Universal One, the Internal Soul of everything, the Essence of Reality of everything, the Ever-Free, the Ever-Blissful, the Ever-Existing. Through material science we come to the same Oneness.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# THE HOLY MOTHER

## HER LIFE AND TEACHINGS

BY LALITA DEVI

Sri Sarada Devi, or the Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, was born in 1853 in a little village called Jayrambati, not far from Calcutta. As a small girl she helped her mother in the kitchen. She had very little schooling, but later on she learnt Bengali, reading with her friends and mostly by her own effort. Indian culture does not identify education with mere literacy. It is the training given to the head and heart to realize the highest ideals of our nation. The education in a village is different from that in a city. Education in the city is full of conflicting ideas, while that in the village consisted in attending temple festivals, religious dramas in which the epics are recited, devotional songs or *bhajan*—which build up the character of the youngsters. I have seen persons quoting poems and verses from the religious texts without knowing how to read or write. The Holy Mother also quoted verses that were imprinted on her memory in her early days by attending such functions. While little Sarada was helping her mother in her domestic duties, the great saint Sri Ramakrishna was passing through a remarkable period of his spiritual life. He was a priest at the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. He was experiencing an irresistible passion for the realization of the Goddess. He was seeking solitude for meditation. He was even forgetting to take his food, being unaware of the passing of day and night. Then he was gradually relieved of his worldly duties. Occasionally he cried or danced, addressing the Goddess, 'Mother, Mother'. The worldly people could not understand such unworldly things. They attributed this to a strange madness or to a spirit possessing him. Chandra Devi, mother of Sri Ramakrishna, had been advised by relatives and friends to get her son married. The services of a de-

voted wife and family responsibilities, might, they thought, make Sri Ramakrishna live a normal worldly life. But it was a problem to get a suitable bride for such a strangely behaving bridegroom. As the family was poor Chandra Devi silently wept.

Sri Ramakrishna, from whom they expected rebellious protests, readily agreed to this proposal and in an inspired mood he uttered, 'Vain is your search in this place; go to Jayrambati and there, in the house of Ramachandra Mukherji, you will find her who is marked out for me'.

They accordingly went to Jayrambati and to their utter astonishment Ramachandra Mukherji agreed to give his daughter, Sarada, just five years old, in marriage to Sri Ramakrishna, who was by then a youth of twenty-three. The marriage that followed was simple as both the families were poor. Time passes on in disregard of worldly occurrences. Little Sarada grew up to womanhood. She grew anxious about her husband when the idle villagers whispered about that her husband was going about naked, shouting the name of Hari. Sarada was now eighteen years of age. She was fourteen when she went to live with her husband. She had hardly spent three months with her husband when she had secured his respect and attention. But four years had since elapsed and if, as others reported, her husband had really gone mad, what was her duty now? She worked hard to avoid criticism. She did not go even to her neighbours' houses.

At this time an opportunity presented itself to her. Some of her friends were going to Calcutta to have a bath in the holy river Ganga, on an auspicious occasion. Young Sarada longed to meet her husband. So she expressed her desire to accompany her friends, who communicated this information to her



father. He was not slow to understand the real purpose of her visit to Calcutta and hence he himself escorted her. After a short but serious illness on the journey—as she was not accustomed to walk such long distances—during which Mother Kālī consoled her in a vision, she was able to reach Calcutta in a palanquin.

Her husband and her spiritual master cordially welcomed her saying, 'Ah, you are here! All right'. Months passed. Everyone pitied the Holy Mother for her life of virginhood even though married. Once her mother remarked in the hearing of Sri Ramakrishna that her daughter was married to a lunatic and that she would not get any children to call her 'mother'. Sri Ramakrishna replied that she had nothing to worry about it. Her daughter would have so many children that she would be tired of being called 'mother' day and night. Once he asked the Holy Mother, 'Do you want to drag me down into Māyā?' To this searching question she readily replied, 'Why should I do that?' A noble answer indeed! It was a spontaneous expression of a noble nature and lofty ideals. Sri Ramakrishna himself said to his disciples in his later days, 'Had she not been so pure, who knows whether I might not have lost my self-control from her inducements?' Once Sri Ramakrishna identified her with Mother Kali and actually worshipped her. The Holy Mother served the Master with all her love and devotion. One day, as she went into his room, along with a woman devotee, to serve his night meal, Sri Ramakrishna began to talk to her in a highly inspired mood. As he became absorbed, he lost the sense of time and talked away the whole night. The Holy Mother, charmed by the magic of his words, stood before him listening silently. When the day dawned she realized that she was there standing all the while. Once the manager of the Dakshineswar temple remarked, 'We have heard that she lives here, but we have never seen her!' She was so very self-effacing and modest.

She used to rise early (at 3 o'clock in the morning) and have her bath in the Ganga, before any other person was up, and then enter her room from which she seldom came out. At midday, when there would be nobody about the place, she would sit in the sun to dry her long hair. Her daily routine at Dakshineswar included cooking food for the Master and the disciples and devotees who used to take food with him. As the number increased, the Holy Mother had to bake bread from six to eight pounds of flour a day. She sat and slept with the baskets of vegetables and bags of rice and pulses about her. Sri Ramakrishna depended on her for his food because of his delicate digestion. She always personally served his food and used to stand by his side and engage him in light conversation so that he might not fall into meditation. Because of her loving care Sri Ramakrishna improved in health. He once remarked, 'Just see how I am growing fatter by taking the food cooked by you'. If there was no one by his side, she would massage his feet and body with oil. When the Master had finished his meal, she would take her breakfast and sit down to make betel-rolls. While engaged in this, she would be humming some devotional songs, taking care that none should be able to hear her. When everything was finished, she would take her midday meal at about 1 p.m.

The Holy Mother did everything she could to please her spiritual master and husband. She identified herself with him. He imparted to her all the holy Mantras which he had made dynamic by his austerities and devout contemplation and asked her to initiate fitting persons with them.

Once Hriday, Sri Ramakrishna's nephew, showed disrespect to the Holy Mother before the Master himself. She bore it calmly and left the room. The moment she left, the Master expressed his anxiety for Hriday's welfare and said, 'You often slight me, but do not do so in *her* case. If the Being that is in her is roused to anger then even the great gods will not be able to save you!'



This shows how much power she had, and yet she looked so simple when performing her household duties.

Once a rich merchant wanted to offer Rs. 10,000 to the Master for his personal use. The Master rejected this offer and told him to go to the Holy Mother so that if she had no objection she might accept it. But the Holy Mother, too, refused, saying if she accepted the money it would be as good as the Master accepting it.

When Sri Ramakrishna fell seriously ill towards the end, the Holy Mother decided to invoke divine aid. She lay prostrate before the deity for two days without food or drink. On the second night she heard a sound and awoke from her torpor, and an idea flashed in her mind. 'Who is husband and who is wife? Who is my relative in this world?' She was filled with utter renunciation and all attachment for the Master disappeared. When the Master saw her coming he asked her, 'Well, did you get anything? Well, everything is unreal. Is it not so?'

On a previous occasion the Holy Mother did the same thing as she was seriously suffering from eye trouble, following dysentery. Then the Goddess appeared to her in a vision and suggested remedies for her troubles.

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, the Holy Mother was removing her ornaments (as a Hindu widow does on her husband's death), when she had a vision of the Master. He said, 'What are you doing? I have not gone away. I have only passed from one room to another'. This vision restored her peace of mind.

The Master had once asked the Holy Mother to visit the places of pilgrimage he himself could not visit. Accordingly, in 1886, she, with a party of devotees, visited, among other places, Banaras, Ayodhya, and Vrindaban. At Vrindaban the Holy Mother stayed on for a year. There she constantly worshipped and meditated. She had many spiritual experiences during these days. Here for the first time she initiated a disciple under instructions from the Master.

When the Holy Mother returned to Kamar-pukur, completing her pilgrimage, according to the instructions of Sri Ramakrishna, she had to face loneliness and poverty. The paltry sum of seven rupees that she was getting from the temple was discontinued. Sometimes she partook of only one meal and that too without any salt in it. Her dress had become poor like that of a beggar woman. There was an uproar of criticism among the women of the village because she, a widow, wore bracelets and put on a red-bordered saree. Several times she wanted to remove the bracelets, but Sri Ramakrishna appeared to her and asked her not to do so.

Though the Holy Mother was silent, yet the fact of her privations and straitened circumstances became known to others. The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna decided to bring her to Calcutta. After some hesitation she went to Calcutta. She was taken care of by the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Her family troubles increased. Her mother died; her youngest brother, who was qualified as a medical practitioner, died prematurely. The burden of looking after his wife, who had become insane, and daughter fell upon the Holy Mother. One day this favourite niece of hers—her deceased brother's daughter, who was always sick and was addicted to opium—threw a big egg-plant at the Holy Mother with great force. It hurt the Holy Mother seriously and swelling appeared on her back immediately. The ever forgiving Holy Mother looked at the photograph of the Master with folded hands and said, 'Lord, please forgive her misdemeanour, for she is senseless!'

The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna used to send people for initiation to the Holy Mother. Once Swami Premananda remarked, 'We are sending to the Holy Mother the poison we could not ourselves take'. (It is said that after giving initiation the Guru takes upon himself the sins of his disciples). Once the Holy Mother was seen washing her feet frequently in the holy waters of the Ganga. Being questioned by one of her disciples why



she did so, she replied that she was suffering from intense burning sensation in her feet and stomach because of the indiscriminate touch of the people. It was only the Ganga water that would relieve her a little. The touch of some people, she would say, refreshed her, while that of others irritated her body. But she did not allow the news to spread, lest her well-wishers should prevent people from touching her feet. Such was the magnanimous nature of the Holy Mother. She was the incarnation of compassion.

In her last days she seriously suffered. Her disciples remarked that this was due to the sins which she had taken upon herself from all sorts of people. The Holy Mother replied, 'We are born for this purpose. Do you think that the Master came only to take Rasagollas (a delicious kind of sweet)?' She used to wake up at 2 a.m. and do Japa. Being questioned, she replied that she was doing so for the sake of her disciples.

She was instrumental in transforming many evil-disposed persons by her spiritual power. One of her disciples, who was a drunkard, was cured of this bad habit of his. A young wife, who was trying to wreak vengeance on her husband who wanted to lead an exclusively religious life against her will, was converted. Later on she stopped such conversions saying that she had to spend on a few persons her store of merit which was meant for many. She appeared in the dreams of many of her disciples and gave them initiation and also helped them in their difficulties. When some of them actually took initiation later from her, they were surprised to find that the Mantra they had heard in their dreams was the same. She enquired into the religious traditions of the persons concerned and their nature and temperament and then initiated them accordingly, without creating any conflict of ideals in their minds, to each according to the needs of his case.

She did not encourage all types of people to renounce the world. To those to whom married life was suitable, she said, 'Do you not see everything in this world in couples,

two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet, and so on? So also the male and female principles. Everything is in the mind. Don't you see that the master married me!' One day a lady devotee requested the Holy Mother to bid her daughter get married. To this the Holy Mother replied, 'Is it not a misery to remain in lifelong slavery to another and always dance to his tune?'

What is the message of the Holy Mother as a wife, nun, and mother—all in one? On the cult side of her message is her personality and on the cultural side of it are her teachings. The cult is the soul and the culture is the body. Culture without cult has no meaning. It only becomes a feeble twisting of the intellect. Cult without culture has no social significance. The Holy Mother is a unique example of these two aspects. She lived among her relatives and devotees. She shared their smiles and tears and at the same time her renunciation was wonderful. She wept bitterly when she heard that her nephew had died, but in the evening at Puja time she became serious and did the Puja as normally as ever.

The Holy Mother was of medium height, with quite a well-built body. One of her disciples remarked once, 'Mother, from where did you get such exquisite beauty and charm?' A monk who saw her at the age of forty described her as 'having the delicacy and tenderness of a maiden in her countenance'. Subtle grace, dignity, and compassion were always radiating from her face. One felt the utmost freedom in her company. Many people who came to her with lots of questions felt no inclination to ask them because their doubts were dissolved the moment they came into her exalted presence.

She retained the bashfulness of her maidenhood till the end of her life. She did not talk directly even to her male disciples excepting one or two. Whenever they came to prostrate before her, she drew her veil and covered her body with a sheet of cloth and she spoke in soft undertones, which, one of her lady disciples or companions (such as Golāp



Mā or Gauri Mā) would interpret to others. Even while going to take her bath in the Ganga, she would be accompanied by a companion.

One instance of her bashfulness is worth citing here. While at Dakshineswar, she occupied a very small room with a verandah which had bamboo-mat screen all round. In order to have a glimpse of Sri Ramakrishna she made small holes in the screen. One day when Sri Ramakrishna remarked in fun that the holes were becoming larger, his nephew

replied saying that Sri Ramakrishna was the cause of it all. The Holy Mother said later on that she got rheumatic pain by constantly standing near the screen. The Mother's great modesty reminds one of the following verse in the *Durgā Saptasatī*. (V. 44):

मा देवी सर्वभूतेषु लज्जारूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

'Salutations to the Goddess who pervades all beings in the form of bashfulness'. Truly was the Holy Mother a manifestation of the Goddess in this form.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

BY KUMUD BANDHU SEN

Once a profoundly significant discussion took place between Swami Yogananda<sup>1</sup> and Girish Chandra Ghosh<sup>2</sup> at the Calcutta residence of Balaram Bose.<sup>3</sup> It will not be out of place to present here the purport of this discussion, the contents of which are at once important and thought-provoking. It was about the middle of July 1897. Swami Yogananda had just returned to Calcutta from Almora whither he had accompanied Swami Vivekananda two months earlier. Though he had gone to Almora for a change of climate, Swami Yogananda had to leave that place after a short stay as it did not suit his health. Though outwardly not ill, he was not feeling quite fit. Swami Vivekananda was very anxious for and took all possible care of Swami Yogananda's health. As he told Girish Ghosh later, Swami Yogananda did not like to cause any worry to Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) on his account when Swamiji's own health was none too good.

In the course of his conversation with Girish Ghosh, Swami Yogananda said: 'Swamiji' wants to establish a monastery for

women Sannyasinis under the direct guidance of the Mother.<sup>4</sup> All the women disciples of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) would be able to live together in the proposed Math for women, and other women, including those from the West even, who desire to lead a life of renunciation and meditation may come and live there and derive immense benefit by coming into intimate contact with the living ideals and hallowed associations of the women disciples. Those child-widows and aspiring spinsters who wish to dedicate their lives for the realization of the highest spiritual ideals and in the cause of the betterment of the condition of women all over the country will be eligible for membership of the women's Math. By the blessings of the Mother, who will be their guiding spirit, there will arise among them Brahmavadinis like Gargi and Maitreyi of old, and giant personalities even greater than the past heroines and Brahmavadinis described in our mythology and history. The Mother's glowing personal example of purity and character, her spiritual talks and teachings based on her own realizations and her ennobling love and care will inspire and elevate the inmates of the proposed Math, at the same time instilling into them a

<sup>1</sup> A Sannyasin disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>2</sup> The great actor-dramatist of Bengal and a staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>3</sup> A favourite householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>4</sup> The Holy Mother.



new force that will awaken their dormant energy. They will be transformed entirely and endowed with a new vision and realization of their own *śakti* so that they too can work fearlessly for the highest good of humanity.

'Swamiji told me with great emotion, "Our Mother is a vast reservoir of spiritual energy, though outwardly calm like the deep ocean. Her advent marks the beginning of a new era in the history of India. The ideals lived and taught by her would not only spiritualize the efforts for the emancipation of women in India but also influence and penetrate into the minds and hearts of women all the world over. Motherhood represented the highest expression of womanhood, especially in India. It is an innate instinct in every woman, the signs of which might be discovered even in a little girl".'

'In the West the whole structure of society rested on the wifehood of woman. But motherhood was the true expression of divine love, sublime, noble, and broad as the sky. Various heterogeneous ideas and customs have been introduced into Indian society as a result of contacts with various alien races and cultures. This has vitiated the true ideal of motherhood that always obtained in our society and we have gradually drifted away from the moorings of our ancient ideal in individual as well as communal life. Sri Ramakrishna came amongst us in order to uphold and revivify this great ideal through his own life and realizations. Even in the midst of his varied and austere spiritual practices, in accordance with the injunctions of different religions, Sri Ramakrishna never swerved from the truly noble ideal of the Motherhood of the Divinity. He accepted the Brāmani<sup>5</sup> as his first guide and teacher. While taking to the life of complete renunciation, he never rejected his wife, whom he identified with the Divine

Mother, as reflected in his own mother Chandra Devi. He saw clearly in her (the Holy Mother) the perfect manifestation of pure love and devotion. She was, to him, a living embodiment of the Divine Mother. This realization of his was no hallucination or idealization. It sprang from his own personal intuitive experiences in the highest state of spiritual beatitude and God-realization. The motherly affection and natural compassion and grace of the (Holy) Mother did not arise from any earth-bound relationship, but radiated spontaneously from the eternal source of love divine, so very characteristic of an Incarnation. Her life, dedicated to the service and welfare of all her children, irrespective of any earthly discriminations, truly indicated the ideal of motherhood. Her grace was not limited to her own relatives or devotees at home or in her native village. It was unrestricted and unbounded, and conferred on all persons who sought for it and came to her. Secular and spiritual duties blended into one homogeneous act of motherly love in her life. Swamiji always spoke highly of this ideal of motherhood, which he said would ennoble women in every country. The contemplated nunnery would be the central organization for disseminating this great ideal under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Mother'.

In reply, Girish Ghosh said, 'It is an altogether new and bold idea of reforming our society and improving the lot of our women. Swamiji's will must be fulfilled and I have not the least hesitation in fully supporting this proposal. But it is an arduous task and undoubtedly hazardous in his (Swamiji's) present state of health when it is hardly advisable for him to undertake such a strenuous responsibility. We shall of course implicitly follow him in whatever he tells us to do. But his failing health is making all of us anxious and the doctors have strongly advised him to take complete rest'.

Swami Yogananda said, 'Bodily ill health or any other impediment from any source is not going to daunt or dissuade him from his determination to carry out his plans which he

<sup>5</sup> Bhairavi Brahmani, a nun and an adept in the Tantrika and Vaishnava methods of worship, played an important part in Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual unfoldment and proclaimed openly that Sri Ramakrishna was an Incarnation of God.



firmly believes will benefit society and contribute to the well-being of mankind. He has no other thought even in the present state of his health. He only smiles at our anxiety for and worry over the condition of his health. After listening to all that he told me of his plan for starting a women's Math, I suggested to him, "Do whatever you think will be conducive to the good of society at large; but please do not bring Mother into public prominence now. Don't you remember the Master telling us that his body would not survive if we preached him before the public? The same may be said in respect of the Mother too. I do not allow all and sundry to meet the Mother or touch her feet while offering their salutations. I see that only sincere devotees of pure character have her *darśan*. Therefore, I humbly request you, brother, not to disturb the Mother at present. You may start the women's Math with the help and co-operation of women devotees of spotless character and spiritual realization, also possessing learning and skill in various branches of knowledge and work, who are capable of taking charge of this organization without any direct association with men as such, not to speak of our Sadhus". As soon as I finished saying this, Swamiji heartily thanked me and smilingly said, "Mantri,<sup>6</sup> you have given me a sound piece of advice and aptly reminded me of the Master's words in this respect. I shall not disturb Mother. Let her fulfil her mission according to her own will and in the manner she chooses. Who are we to dictate to her? Rather, we can accomplish everything with her blessings. I have personally seen and felt the power of her blessings, which can do miracles". So Swamiji will not disturb Mother by pursuing his plan to place her as the Head of the proposed Math for the new order of women Sannyasinis'.

Girish Ghose replied, 'Yogen Swami' you

have done yeoman's service indeed. Now I see why you accompanied Swamiji to Almora. Yes, Mother's blessings are always wonderful. Listen, Yogen Swami, I am myself a living example of the wonderful manifestation of Mother's blessings. Once I fell ill and my condition became serious, the doctors giving up all hopes of my recovery. I used to feel terribly restless owing to severe pain and other symptoms of my ailment. One night I had a strange dream. I saw a woman standing in front of me and with motherly affection assuring me of my early recovery from the illness and at the same time offering me a liquid medicine to drink. Then the dream ceased and I fell into deep sleep for a long time. Next morning, strange to say, I felt almost all right. My illness had subsided considerably and I was on the way to complete recovery. It was a mystery to me then, as I was still a stranger to such phenomena, having not yet had the privilege of meeting or receiving the blessings of the Master and the Mother. Later on, when I visited Jayrambati<sup>7</sup> and saw the Holy Mother, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the likeness of the Mother was exactly similar to that of the woman I had seen in my dream. I was wonder-struck when it became clear to me that the Mother's affectionate voice and countenance were the same as those of the dream-figure that had ministered to me and comforted me during my illness. Now I distinctly see that it was the Mother herself who offered me the medicine in the dream and cured me. It is her grace which brought me into close contact with the Master and thereby enabled me to find shelter at his feet. And it is through her blessings that I have been vouchsafed the privilege of intimate and hallowed association with her and with you all,—especially Swamiji,—who have renounced everything for Sri Guru Maharaj even at such a tender age'.

<sup>6</sup> Literally, 'counsellor' or 'minister'.

<sup>7</sup> Girish Ghosh used to call Swami Yogananda thus.

<sup>8</sup> The native village of the Holy Mother.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Sri Sarada Devi—the Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, was born on the 22nd December 1853. Her Hundredth Birthday falls on the 8th of this month. Appropriate to the occasion, we present in this issue writings from different contributors on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother. The Holy Mother Birth Centenary which falls in December 1953, will be observed during the period between December 1953 and December 1954. . . .

Cecille Pomerene, with whose poem the issue opens, is an ardent student of Vedanta in New York. . . .

*Sister Nivedita*, the well-known Western disciple of Swami Vivekananda, needs no introduction to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*. Though much remains to be done by way of full recognition of her laudable services to India, the influence of her towering personality deeply stirred the creative endeavours of some of the master minds of her times and her talented intellect expressed itself in a number of important works she has left behind. Kalpalata Munshi, M.A., Ph.D., who is on the staff of the Nivedita School and has dedicated her life to the sacred and noble cause of women's education in India, contributes an illuminating article on this passionate lover and dedicated daughter of Mother India, on the happy occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Mission Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta. (A 'Note' on the School's Jubilee celebrations appears elsewhere in these columns). . . .

J. Lalita Devi, a new and welcome contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, writing with commendable clarity and feeling, summarizes the *Life and Teachings of the Holy Mother*.

### PROPER UTILIZATION OF YOUTH'S TALENT

'It is essential that we must grow great men if our country is to become a great country', observed Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Indian Republic, in the course of his Convocation Address to the students of the Kashmir University. 'We must not spoil', he continued, 'the hopes of the future with the hatred of the past. It is essential for us to overlook the past, look ahead to the future, and see to it that all people of communities, of races, and religions have a sense of goodwill, sense of confidence for one supreme vision to make the State worthy of the great future which they envisage. A great future which is not so much antagonistic to the past but which brings out the periods when the past itself was essentially great'.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's exhortation, in the spirit of our ancient seers, focusses attention on one of the most vital problems confronting our nation today. The need for social reconstruction and the demand for technological progress are compelling our temples of learning to function in an abstract atmosphere, divorced from the concrete influence of culture and of spiritual values. To mould the raw material of youth into great and selfless leaders of society, who will place the larger interests of mankind above the interests of their own selfish life, it is necessary to stress this important aspect of university education. Clarifying this point, he said:

'You must develop sufficient physical stamina among the youth and rise in the scale of nations. . . . I am anxious more and more attention should be paid to these sides also so that the youth of the country will develop physical strength which will produce in them moral courage also.

'The next important thing . . . is to supply you with technical personnel necessary for the



building up of your country. It must stimulate intellectual variety and impulse'.

'It is essential that your University must progress . . . to such an extent as to be able to supply all the needs which you have for the building up of your country. More than imparting of knowledge or the imparting of technical skill, than all that, is the need to foster independence of judgment, foster integrity of mind'.

The attainment of independence has stimulated a welcome interest in the material sciences in the mind of the youth of India. The mental forces of impetuosity and restless craving for radical social changes, so characteristic of youth, have to be tamed and canalized for the constructive upbuilding of our society so that it can truly reflect the noble qualities of head and heart.

'That is the quality of vision, a quality of sense of brotherhood and a buoyant hope for the future to get away from narrow loyalties and concentrate on the Supreme Unseen whose physical embodiment on earth is humanity. While a leader lacks in this quality of ambition, he lacks in leadership. Leadership is nothing more than this quality of vision. It is passing beyond the inanities of temporary life and trying to concentrate our vision on the greatness of the spirit, on the human sense of brotherhood, on a vision of the future which will get all people together'.

In the actual inculcation of the lofty ideals of our motherland, viz. the passion for spiritual perfection, our universities have undoubtedly a leading part to play. Are the universities keen on disciplining the life of the students? Is the multitude of students, who step out of the portals of the universities, imbued to an appreciable extent with the traditions of our cultural heritage? On the proper answer to these questions depends the assessment of the reorientation which our university education is urgently in need of. Rightly, therefore, has Dr. Radhakrishnan expressed his hope that the 'universities will not be content merely with giving adequate attention to physical efficiency and intellectual power but will also stand to realize that there is one Supreme under whose auspices the whole world will have to work as one single family

and that when our qualities are harnessed to wrong things they come and perish'.

So soon after the attainment of freedom, the youth of India appear to many to be either resting on their oars or feeling somewhat bewildered by the welter of slogans and ideologies. In despair, many are turning to quack nostrums, though with perfectly earnest intentions of endeavouring hard to find early solutions for our gigantic national problems. The corrective to this can be furnished best by our universities, through proper and complete education of their alumni. Delineating the spiritual world view of our national genius, Dr. Radhakrishnan said:

'We look upon the Divine as Truth. Our motto is Truth alone conquers, not untruth. We call the Supreme *satya nārāyaṇa*, *satya svarūpa*. We make Him the embodiment of Truth. If the Divine is Truth the response which is needed from us to that Divine is such an integrity of mind that will not accept your most cherished convictions if they happen to be untrue. In schools, colleges, and universities it must be your duty to develop what I would call independence of thinking'.

'The Real is one. It may be worshipped in many different ways. Kabir, a great fifteenth century apostle of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood, told us the Hindu thinks his God lives in Banaras, the Muslim thinks his God lives in Mecca but the true God does not live in a city made by human hands. He lives everywhere. He lives in the whole world. That was the message he gave to us. That is the message we have to proclaim to the world today when there are conflicting ideologies'.

The problem before the Indian universities, therefore, is to effect a harmonious synthesis of the scientific traditions of the West and the spiritual heritage of India. We can conquer our ills if we realize our soul. Swami Vivekananda, with the unerring vision of a seer, pointed out this spirit of synthesis. He said:

'I want the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist. Deep as the ocean, broad as the infinite skies, that is the sort of heart we want. Let us be as progressive as any nation that ever existed and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards our tradition as Hindus alone know how to be'.



## GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL

Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret E. Noble of Tyrone, North Ireland), one of the leading English disciples of Swami Vivekananda, met the Swami for the first time in 1896 in London. She soon completely identified herself with the great mission of the Swami—whom she accepted as her Master and Guru—and came to India in 1898 to join the rank of the Swami's workers. Swami Vivekananda gave her the name 'Nivedita', meaning 'the dedicated', which was so appropriate with her life and activities. Nivedita dedicated herself heart and soul to the cause of India and of Indian women, and undertook the task of founding an educational institution for girls based on the ideas and traditions of Indian womanhood.

The Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta came into existence, in accordance with these ideals set before the Sister by Swami Vivekananda, in order to spread women's education in the country and thus ameliorate their condition. The opening ceremony was performed in November 1898 by the Holy Mother, in the presence of Swami Vivekananda. The Ramakrishna Mission took charge of the School in 1918. The Ramakrishna Mission Nivedita Girls' School has successfully completed fifty years of its useful existence. It is a matter for great joy that the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the School are going to be held in a befitting manner between the 11th and 19th of this month. It is indeed a memorable

occasion not only for legitimately proud satisfaction on the part of those dedicated workers who have silently but steadily carried on the work that was so dear to Swami Vivekananda, but also for paying our homage and rendering our heart-felt gratitude to the great founder—the illustrious Sister Nivedita, whose contribution to the cause of India's welfare and her struggle for the country's political freedom were immense. She adopted India as her motherland and sacrificed herself at her altar.

Apart from the functions of the Golden Jubilee Week in Calcutta, the occasion of the School's semi-centenary will be commemorated also by:

- (1) publishing an authentic biography of Sister Nivedita in English and Bengali and also publishing a short history of the School;
- (2) offering floral wreaths at the mausoleum of Sister Nivedita at the Darjeeling Crematorium;
- (3) inaugurating a Nivedita Lectureship at the Calcutta University; and
- (4) buying a plot of land to expand the arts and crafts department.

The School (now at No. 5, Nivedita Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta-3) provides general education from the Infant to the Matriculation class, following the syllabus of the Calcutta University in the Upper Classes and kindergarten and oral methods in the lower Classes. There is an Industrial Section where women are taught professional courses with the idea of making them self-supporting.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE LINGAYAT MOVEMENT—A SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN KARNATAK.** By S. M. HUNASHAL. *Published by Karnataka Sahitya Mandira, Dharwar. Pages xxii, 268. Price Rs. 5-8.*

This book attempts to give an account of Lingayatism, otherwise known as Veerashaivism, in its aspect of 'a social revolution'. The Lingayat movement, mostly confined to Karnataka, is little known

outside, especially because its founders, saints, and votaries all have used the Kannada language for their writings and teachings. The Lingayat saints have developed the art of giving in a few simple words great and abstruse truths to the people. The Kannada literature and culture have been greatly enriched by the followers of this movement.

The Introduction and the first two chapters give



a general background to the understanding of the Lingayat movement. They deal with Philosophy, Religion, and Science, their mutual relation and their relation to social sciences, and revolution and counter-revolution. The third gives an account of Buddhistic 'Revolution' and the fourth is devoted to the analysis of Shankara's Vedanta. In the next seven chapters is given an account of Lingayatism as a monotheistic religion, its philosophy, its ethics, the social revolution it effected, its socio-economics, its psychology, etc. The remaining fifteen chapters are devoted to a comparison of Lingayatism with various other religions and movements and schemes including Plato's Ideal State and Gandhism, and the future of Lingayatism.

The book is conceived well and the subject is dealt with comprehensively, which makes it an interesting reading. But regarding the treatment of the subject itself we have certain remarks to make. It is clear the author is highly prejudiced against 'Hinduism', its scriptures, philosophies, and culture. Throughout the book he has not one good word to say for them. On the other hand the whole book is full of disparagement of Hinduism, the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, the *shastras*, the *Gita*, and other Hindu scriptures. Their sublime teachings are twisted or misrepresented to suit the author's purpose. To give only an instance among many, the sublime idea of the *Gita* of 'work for work's sake without looking to the fruits thereof' is in the author's opinion designed to suppress the lower classes (p. 179).

This is an instance of his general attitude which makes him blind to everything connected with 'Hinduism', and his disparagement extends to Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Shivaji, Gandhiji, (even Plato has his share of ridicule for his ideas of society similar to those of the Hindus) and everyone considered great by the Hindus. The major portion of the book consists of quotations of passages selected with an eye to painting 'Hinduism' black. Probably, by this means he seeks to bring the Lingayat movement into bold relief.

The main authority on whom the author relies for an understanding of the teachings of Hinduism is Shri M. N. Roy and his Marxist books! And he has hunted out passages from other authors who have anything to say against Hinduism. More than half of the book consists of quotations. He has no use for hundreds of Indian and foreign scholars and spiritual men who have spoken about the real values of Hinduism. Hinduism never lacked reformers and 'revolutionists' within its own domain, even of a more thorough-going character and more bitterly critical than the Lingayats or the present author who considers Lingayatism outside the pale of Hinduism. But they had love in their hearts and did not sing a mere negative hymn of hate. And this book

smacking of a medieval attitude worthy of a fanatical missionary comes rather too late in the day. We regret to say the book goes beyond its scope indicated by the title.

Hinduism has enough vitality and has continued for thousands of years in the face of attacks and vicissitudes of a colossal nature. It is a mighty ocean giving rise to these various waves of 'revolution', whenever needed, to clear its surface of accretions, which come and pass into insignificance making noise for some time. Such waves will continue to rise and it is for the waves to identify themselves with the ocean when their task is done.

In our view the author has succeeded in doing a great harm to his own sect and the great saints which it has produced. The book is far removed from rationality and objectivity. The author would have done a service to the country if he had given the beautiful teachings of these saints about spiritual life rather than what he has chosen to do. 'Say what you have to say about yourself; the world has no time to hear what you think of others' is a maxim that is worth remembering. If nothing else, Hinduism has at least the virtue of finding a place in its bosom for every system of thought, even the most bitterly antagonistic to it. It is to this attitude that Lingayatism itself owes its origin and continued existence, for Hinduism is all-inclusive and not exclusive. The whole has no quarrel with the parts.

PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE AND OTHER PAPERS. By J. C. P. d'Andrade. Published by Orient Longmans Ltd., 17, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 13. Pages 279. Price Rs. 10.

This is a volume of philosophical papers by the late Prof. J. C. P. d'Andrade of Elphinstone College, Bombay. The chief concern of the learned author, who was himself a seeker after truth, is to stimulate others to think for themselves. For it is this philosophical thinking that will help man in the attainment of blessedness, which is the end of life. The learned author observes that in our present generation and even in India, the land of spirituality *par excellence*, 'pure love of knowledge is at a discount, and people are hurrying madly forward in the pursuit of material prosperity. Our values have got confused, and it seems that we place the end of life in wealth and physical comfort. But though the pursuit of material interests may produce immediate prosperity, lasting good can be achieved only by building on sound spiritual foundations'.

The author further observes: 'It will be interesting to ask what ends are uppermost in men's minds today when philosophy is condemned as useless. The answer is writ large in the history of our age, it is writ in blood in the unprecedented happenings that are disgracing humanity today.'



'The pressing question today, therefore, is, "What are the ends worth pursuing if our life is not to suffer shipwreck?" That is the practical question *par excellence*. No other question can take precedence of it. And that question is essentially philosophical.

'Our nature has various ends and any one of these ends, so far as it is an end, is practical. Practical is that which is connected with our practical life, with our life in action, and our life in action is pursuit of ends, conscious or unconscious. To eat is one such end, and to philosophize is another, and there is no sense in calling the first practical and the second impractical.

'To the ancients philosophy was a way of life, to the moderns it has been for the most part merely a way of thought'. Truth must find its expression not merely in words, but in life.

'Man may try to leave philosophy out of life, but philosophy will not leave itself out. If good philosophy is left out, bad philosophy will take its place; Nature abhors a philosophical vacuum'.

All the papers in the volume plead for a true philosophy, which is defended with the zeal of a crusader and the logic of a dialectician against economists, materialists, and logical positivists.

The papers in the volume have been arranged in four groups: The Value of Philosophy; Problems of Philosophy; Some Philosophers; and Miscellaneous Essays. The first gives the reader the best approach to the writer's thought and philosophy as a whole. The second group contains a discussion of several particular philosophic problems. The third section contains papers on a few philosophers. Spinoza and Bradley were his inspiration in philosophy. The last section includes papers and articles of a miscellaneous nature on a variety of subjects treated in a popular, though essentially philosophical, manner.

Prof. d'Andrade writes in a simple, forceful, and felicitous style. Each paper abounds with examples of illuminating thought.

The volume will stimulate any common reader to think for himself and will endear philosophy to his heart in a manner he has not suspected before. The writer has done a service that politicians and social reformers will not be able to do. According to Spinoza, freedom is knowledge, and, in the opinion of Plato, virtue is knowledge. The volume will form a very valuable addition to the department of philosophy in any college of India.

K. C. CHAKRAVARTI

IBSENISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE GITA.  
BY KAPILA. Available from H. Ramchandran,  
1022/9, VII Cross Road, Sri Ramapuram, Banga-  
lore 3 (Mysore State). Pages 20.

The title of this interesting monograph reveals

the theme. The author explains how the essential message of the *Gita*—'the performance of right action which is self-fulfilment'—is also the message of Ibsen's plays, 'every one of which is concerned with the tragedy of the non-self-fulfilment through egotism of the oppressing or the suppressed type'. He makes this clear, with the help of quotations from the *Gita* and by reference to the characters of and situations in the plays of Ibsen. He also proves that Ibsen is not a 'realist' in the ordinary sense of the word and that he is in fact a true idealist. The fervent plea for a posthumous award of the Nobel Prize to Ibsen on this ground may strike one as not quite relevant to the main thesis of the work, though no one would seriously object to such an award, for Ibsen is easily one of the most significant of modern playwrights. It is, on the whole, an ably written monograph on an interesting aspect of Ibsen's dramas. It is unfortunate that there should be a dozen mis-spellings and three or four omissions in a work of this size.

A. V. RAO

WHO SHALL LEAD US NOW? BY VITHALDAS  
BODANI. Published by the Author, Pradyumna  
Nagar, Rajkot. Pages 31. Price As. 9.

It deals with the present political situation, and poses the common man's problems and offers solutions to those problems.

#### SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

ABHIDHARMA-SAMUCHCHAYA (OF ASANGA).  
BY PRAHLAD PRADHAN. To be had of The Visva-  
Bharati Publishing Department, 6/3 Dwarkanath  
Tagore Lane, Calcutta. Pages 143. Price Rs. 6.

This is a learned edition of a famous work by Asanga belonging to the school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It was first discovered in a fragmentary form by Rāhula Sāṅkṛityāyana in Tibet. There are the Chinese and the Tibetan translations of the entire work. The missing portion of the text has now been retranslated into Sanskrit from the Chinese and the Tibetan translations and having regard to the Bhāṣhya on the text.

The work is in eight chapters, divided into two groups—Lakshana Samuchchaya (chapters 1 to 4) and Vinishchaya Samuchchaya (chapters 5 to 8). The first chapter deals with the five Skandhas, the eighteen Dhātus, and the twelve Āyatanas. The next three chapters deal with Sangraha (collection), Samprayoga (union), and Samanvāgama (accompaniment). The fifth to the eighth chapters deal with Vinishchaya (interpretation), including the topics of Satya, Dharma, Prāpti, and Sāṅkathya. Under the head 'Duhkha-Satya', in the fifth chapter, Anitya, Duhkha, Shunya, and Anātma are discussed. The other heads of Satya are Samudaya, Nirodha, and Mārga. The sixth chapter deals with



Dharma and exalts the Vaipulya Dharma, which is also called Vaikalya Dharma—as it destroys all enveloping errors, and Vaitulya Dharma—as it is peerless. Vaipulya means that it seeks the good of all and is sublime and profound. It refers also to Adbhuta Dharma and Upadesha Dharma. The seventh chapter discusses Prāpti (combination) under the heads of Pudgala and Abhisamaya. The eighth and last chapter deals with Sānkathya under seven heads.

The work is very brief and yet goes into innumerable ramifications. It seeks to exalt the Vaipulya Dharma of the Mahayana over the Shrāvākayāna and the Hinayāna.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

THE MEGHADUTA OF KALIDASA. EDITED BY DR. J. B. CHAUDHURI. *Published by the Prachyavani Mandir, 3, Federation Street, Calcutta 9. Pages 212. Price Rs. 8.*

Lovers of Sanskrit learning will remain grateful to Dr. J. B. Chaudhuri for his masterly critical edition of the *Meghadūta* of Kalidasa, published as Volume II of the Prachyavani Mandira Dr. K. N. Katju Series. It is a storehouse of valuable materials, mostly collected from less known manuscript sources. It contains an edition of the Subodhā

commentary by Bharata Mallika, which has been critically edited for the first time by Dr. Chaudhuri. The editor makes a comparative study of this commentary with many published commentaries, as well as eight hitherto unpublished commentaries, and comes to the right conclusion that Bharata Mallika's is the best commentary on the *Meghadūta* hitherto known. The copious extracts from the commentaries of Kalyānamalla, Sanātana Gosvāmin, Hara-govinda Vāchaspati, Rāmanātha Tarkālankāra, Krishnadāsa Vidyāvāgisha, Sarasvati-tirtha, Shāshvata, and others on the *Meghadūta*, which are still unpublished, will be hailed by Sanskrit scholars all over the world.

The English and Bengali translations of the original, variant readings of the texts of the *Meghadūta* and the commentaries collected from multifarious sources, copious geographical and grammatical notes, glossary, and particularly the synoptical table of the verses of the *Meghadūta* based upon thirteen commentaries of the *Meghadūta*, mostly unpublished, have much enhanced the value of this edition.

The author and the publishers are to be heartily congratulated on the production of this monumental work in the field of Sanskrit scholarship.

DR. AMARESWAR THAKUR

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, SEATTLE REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1950-SEPTEMBER 1951

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., for the year under review:

As usual Swami Vividishananda, Head of the Centre, gave a public lecture every Sunday morning, discussing the theory and practice of Vedanta. At the beginning of the season the Swami discontinued the Tuesday night class for the public. The reason for this is that many found it difficult to attend two night classes a week, and the Swami felt that the elimination of this class would afford more time for studying and analysing the teachings of Vedanta at home. The Friday night class, for students and members only, continued as usual, taking up the study of the Aphorisms on Yoga by Patanjali.

In February 1951, the Swami was invited by the Whitman College, a residential educational institution in Walla Walla, Washington, to participate in its Campus Conference on Religion. He stayed in Walla Walla for about four days and had a crowded programme of lectures and discussions, along with four other speakers: a Jewish Rabbi from Seattle,

a Greek Orthodox Priest from Tacoma, a Dean of the State Business College in Oregon, and a Professor of Philosophy of the State College in Pullman, Washington. It was a remarkable experience on the part of the Swami. It gave him an inside glimpse into the inner life of an American College and the life of the boys and girls attending the college. The general theme for this conference—'Faith in the Fifties'—centres around the idea that through faith, faith in ourselves, in our neighbours, in God—we can build a more secure future for ourselves and our posterity. Because of the prevalent need for strengthening that faith, the Conference was designed to show just how it can and why it should be confirmed. Realizing that indifference or distrust may arise out of misunderstanding, these five men of diverse backgrounds, sects, and beliefs were invited to the Conference for the purpose of having them express their views on the necessity of maintaining faith. Through the medium of assemblies, discussions, seminars, and personal conferences, the visiting speakers attempted to show how religion fits in our lives and how religion today can lead to personal gains tomorrow. Among the various topics the Swami discussed, the following deserve mention:



'Underlying Beliefs common to all Faiths', 'What has Religion to offer Me towards arriving at a workable Philosophy of Life', 'Towards greater World Understanding' (What India thinks of the United States), 'Mysticism in Indian Poetry', 'The Yoga Philosophy', 'The Meaning and Purpose of Life', and 'Hindu Music'. The guest speakers, during their stay in Walla Walla, were invited by the local Chamber of Commerce to a luncheon, followed by brief talks and discussions by each of them.

In appreciation of the Swami's visit and services the President of the Whitman College, Mr. Chester C. Maxey, wrote: 'Permit me to express my personal thanks as well as the gratitude of the entire Whitman College community for your invaluable contribution to the programme of our recent Campus Conference on Religion. Although absence from the city during part of the Conference and time-absorbing duties while on the campus prevented me from attending the regular sessions of the Conference, I was present at the Chamber of Commerce Forum meeting. After that meeting I heard so many favourable comments that I am sure the Conference was an outstanding success. Your participation was an important factor in that result, and I am deeply grateful to you'. The Hospitality Chairman, Kay Shields, wrote: 'Your time and effort contributed a great deal in making our 1951 Campus Conference on Religion an outstanding success. So, on behalf of the C.C.O.R., and Whitman College I would like to extend our thanks for your enthusiastic contribution. All the comments concerning the recent conference have been extremely complimentary to you and the other guest speakers. Your background and knowledge concerning religious thought were indeed thought-provoking to me as well as the rest of the Whitman students who had opportunity to hear you'.

The usual celebrations were held throughout the year, the important ones being the worship of the Divine Mother Durga and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and Lord Buddha, as well as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Swami Devatmananda of Portland came for the Ramakrishna birthday celebration and he spoke on Sunday on Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings. He also spoke at the special dinner held in connection with the celebration. Professor David, who teaches Romanic languages at the University of Washington, and Reverend Shorter, who is the Minister of the People's Church, were also guest speakers at this dinner.

During the year, in addition to Swami Devatmananda there were three other visiting Swamis. In July Swami Shantaswarupananda, who is assisting in the growing work of the Vedanta Societies of San Francisco and Berkeley, California, visited the Centre and stayed for about ten days. One Sunday

he spoke to the congregation, his subject being, 'Spiritual Confusion of Man today'. Swami Pavitrananda, who has been in this country only shortly and has been placed in charge of the Vedanta Society of New York, visited the West Coast on his vacation and came to Seattle towards the end of August. He stayed at the Centre for two weeks. One Sunday he spoke to the congregation on 'Common Sense about Yoga'. It was the first visit to Seattle by both the Swamis. Swami Satprakashananda, the founder and leader of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, Missouri, visited this Centre towards the end of September and stayed for a week. He also spoke one Sunday to the congregation, his subject being, 'The Mind—Its Nature and Functions'. In connection with the Swami's visit, there was a very nice write up, with pictures of both Swami Vividishananda and Swami Satprakashananda, printed by the daily, *Seattle Times*. To quote from the write up:

"Two urbane, well dressed monks chatted yesterday in a handsome North Broadway residence, renewing a long established friendship and discussing one of the world's lesser known religions. The men were Swami Vividishananda, director of the Seattle Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, and Swami Satprakashananda, director of the Centre in St. Louis, Mo., who is making a survey of the Order's activities on the Pacific Coast. Vedanta, often called Hinduism, is based upon early Indian scriptures, the oldest religious writings in existence, known as the *Vedas*. A whole literature has stemmed from the writings, with new interpretations appearing often—two new interpretative books have been published this year. "Vedanta demonstrates the essential unity of all religions", the Seattle Swami explained. "It is a sort of philosophical algebra, in terms of which all religious truth can be explained. We accept all the great prophets and teachings. We accept all humanity, and we don't attempt to make converts. We seek only to clarify our thought, which is the acceptance of universal truth and that man's real nature is divine. We believe the aim of man's life on earth is to unfold and make manifest his divine nature". . . . The Ramakrishna Order has about a dozen Centres in this country, as well as two monasteries and a convent. The latter are in California. Women are comparatively new to the Order. India has about 100 Ramakrishna Centres. General Headquarters of the Order is at Belur, near Calcutta. The Seattle Centre, in a remodelled home at 2716 Broadway N., has a library, reception rooms, and a simple, flower-bedecked chapel with an altar dominated by a gold embossed plaque. "The plaque displays one word in Sanskrit", the Seattle Swami explained. "The word is OM—the sound symbol of the word 'God' in Sanskrit".

During the year under report, the lending library has grown. Extensive improvements have



been made on the house. The entire main floor, including the chapel, library, and kitchen, as well as the second floor rooms, including the sun porch, have been redecorated. A new hot water tank has been purchased and installed. The house is in excellent shape now. The interest in Vedanta in Seattle, as well as in other cities seems to be growing and it is hoped that it will bring in a new influx of members so that many may learn the sublime and glorious truths of Vedanta and find refuge and comfort in these teachings:

**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA,  
PERIANAIKENPALAYAM, COIMBATORE DT.**

REPORT FOR 1951-52

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaikenpalayam, Coimbatore Dt., a highly advanced rural educational centre, has completed the twenty-first year of its successful working. The following is a brief report of its activities for the year 1951-52:

*High School:* Its strength was 155. All the 17 students, sent up for the S.S.L.C. Public Examination came out successful. Engineering was provided as a Bifurcated Course. In addition to various extra-curricular activities—like woodwork, gardening, etc. for Lower Form pupils,—as in previous years, citizenship camps were conducted for each of the classes. A batch of 10 students, with some members of the staff, went on an all-India tour. The Boys' Co-operative Stores and Bank, as well as their Ministry, Parliament, and Court worked well as usual and the hostel attached to the school continued to give to the boys good training in practical citizenship, team work, and organized life. The manuscript magazine and other hobbies such as clay-modelling, etc. helped the students' self-expression. Singing of devotional songs in chorus was taught to all, and special training in music was given to such of those as had aptitude for it.

*Basic Training School:* The Vidyalaya's Basic Training School—a pioneering institution of Basic Education in the Madras State—had 70 students on the rolls, 35 in the first year and 35 in the second year. It provided secondary grade training; weaving formed the main basic craft.

Under the auspices of the Vidyalaya, a Seminar, in Tamil, on Basic Education was organized for four days during May 1952.

It has been proposed to conduct a short re-training course in Basic Education during the summer vacation. The course will be for three months, and 40 students are to be taken in.

Village service was done by the students in the neighbouring villages.

*Teachers' College:* The number on the rolls was 42. The subjects provided were Mathematics,

Social Studies, Basic Education, Tamil, and English. A course of lectures on the contents and methods of Hindu religion formed a special feature.

The college library was enriched with new books received as gifts from the Universities of Ohio and Cornell, U.S.A.

A new hostel, accommodating 64 students, was put up for the use of the College.

Two members of the Vidyalaya staff were deputed to the Ohio and Iowa State Universities, U.S.A., for higher studies in education.

The U. S. Educational Foundation in India granted them Fulbright Travel Grants.

*Voluntary Education Centre:* One such centre has been established in the Vidyalaya under the auspices of the U.N.

*School of Engineering:* This was a new addition, during the year, to the educational activities of the Vidyalaya. It has its separate buildings adjacent to the Vidyalaya, and has been recognized by the Department of Industries, Government of Madras. There were 26 students on the rolls, everyone of whom received a stipend of Rs. 15.

The Industrial Section, now attached to the School of Engineering, also expanded in scope and extent, serving, at the same time, as the crafts section for the students of the first three Forms and as engineering workshop for High School classes.

*Kalānilayam:* It continued to be the model school for the Basic Training School. It has two sections—the Junior Basic School and the Basic Middle School. The former consisted of 157 students, of whom 48 were girls, and the latter 102 students, of whom 17 were girls.

*Rural Service:* In addition to the visits by students to villages, service in the field of sanitation and adult night-schools was organized on a regular basis by means of films, dramas, and celebration of national festivals, besides literary training. The adult night-school was attended by 65 persons. Another night-school, specially meant for mill labourers, was attended by 35 persons.

*Sports and Arts:* The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Memorial Sports were held as usual, and 17 schools and 546 persons from surrounding areas took part.

The Arts Competition, consisting of essay writing, short stories, painting, music, etc., was held as usual, in which 145 boys and girls from 30 High Schools around took part.

*Rural College:* Primarily intended for the villagers of the surrounding rural area, it had 30 students, mainly drawn from the working classes. It imparted instruction in literature, science, history, geography, culture, economics, health, and sanitation, etc. through Tamil medium. English, mathematics, music, and Hindi were included in the curriculum during the year.

*Dispensary:* A total of 16,160 cases were



treated during the year. 78 cases of labour, in the near-by villages, were attended to by the mid-wife attached to the dispensary.

*Tirukkural Research:* The *Tirukkural* Research, on the great Tamil classic *Kural*, undertaken by the Vidyalaya in co-operation with the Tamil Academy, was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, in April 1951. The work of collecting the various commentaries on and the passages of *Kural* was continued, with the co-operation of distinguished Tamil scholars.

#### RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE, NEW YORK

REPORT FOR 1950-52

The following is a brief report of the activities of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, N.Y., U.S.A., for the period 1950-52:

Weekly services were held by Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Centre, on Sunday mornings, and scripture classes on Friday evenings. The Centre observed the Durga Puja, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Buddha, with special devotional services. A commodious reading-room was provided for the use of the congregation, and a lending library made available to members. The Centre's active membership continued at the high level of recent years. The attendance at the services and classes was excellent.

In the year 1947 the Centre acquired the historic cottage at Thousand Island Park, New York, where Swami Vivekananda lived for seven weeks in 1895 and gave his 'Inspired Talks'. The building, carefully renovated so as to preserve the original rooms for future generations, is now known as 'Vivekananda Cottage'. It is used as a summer retreat for the Swamis.

On 14th June 1950, at a special ceremony in the chapel, a bronze portrait-statue of Swami Vivekananda in meditation, by the world-famous sculptor Malvina Hoffman, was unveiled by Srimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, then India's Ambassador to the U.S.A. The gathering on this occasion was perhaps the largest in the Centre's history. A similar function took place in the chapel on 10th January 1952, when an alabaster bust of Sri Ramakrishna, also executed by Malvina Hoffman, was unveiled by Swami Satprakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. Both pieces of sculpture, which have won the praise of competent critics, are permanently installed in the Centre's chapel and add appreciably to its atmosphere of sanctity.

Another noteworthy event at the Centre was the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Meeting, held on 16th December 1950, to pay tribute to the well-known religious teacher and patriot of India.

In June 1951, the Swami sailed for a six-week visit to Sweden, where he held informal talks with a number of people in and around Stockholm who are interested in Vedanta. In April 1952, at the earnest request of the enthusiastic group of Vedanta students in Miami, Florida, U.S.A., he made an extended trip to that city, where he delivered two public lectures—one at the University of Miami and another in a public hall—and renewed his contacts with the group.

During the period under review Swami Nikhilananda had been called on to lecture at a large number of religious, educational, and cultural organizations. Of particular interest is the frequency with which colleges and universities requested him to speak on Hindu philosophy and religion. A course of eight weekly lectures on 'The Wisdom of the East', embodying a survey of Hindu spiritual culture, was given by the Swami at Columbia University, in the city of New York, during February and March 1952. In addition, he has lectured recently at such outstanding institutions in the eastern United States as New York University, Amherst College (Massachusetts), the College of Wooster and Oberlin College (Ohio), the University of Miami (Florida), and Haverford College (Pennsylvania). At the time this report was written, he was also expected to speak at Sweet Briar College and the University of Virginia.

As a result of the increasing attendance at the lectures and classes during the past several years, the Centre plans to make extensive alterations on its chapel—including the construction of a large gallery—during the summer of 1952. When completed, the new chapel will hold comfortably over two hundred people.

The latest addition to the sizable list of the Swami's literary works is the second volume of his translation of the Upanishads, with notes based on Shankara's commentary, which was published by Harper & Brothers, New York, in April 1952. The first volume appeared in June 1949. The entire series is expected to run to four volumes. Among the Swami's other publications which have become well known throughout the United States are his translations of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, with notes based on Shankara. The latter is used as a text-book in several universities.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls on 7th January 1953.





The Holy Mother and Sister Nivedita